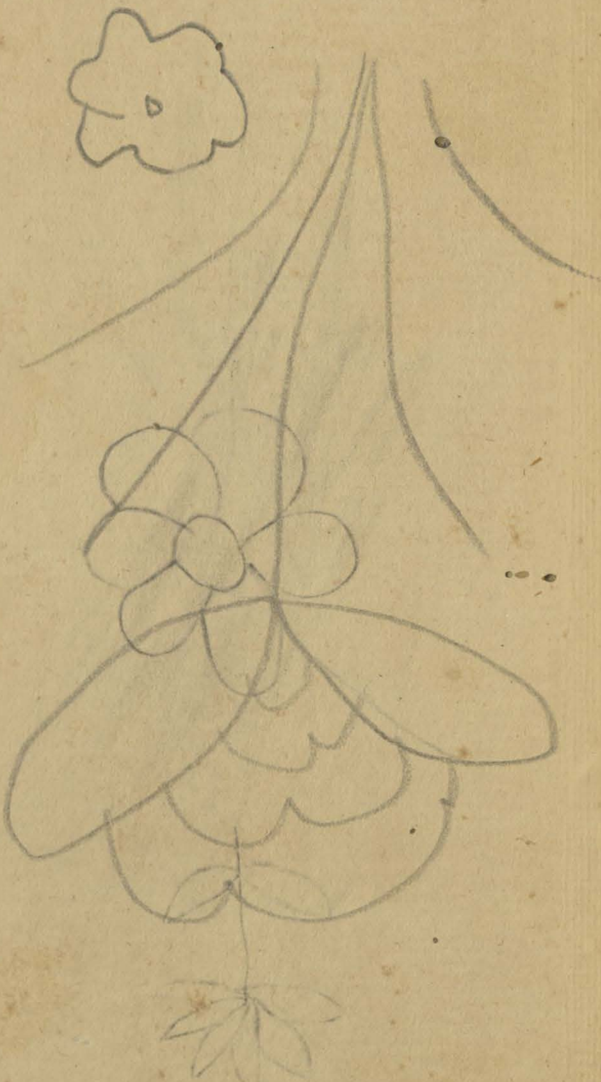


A LETTER FROM INDIA





BY THE SAME AUTHOR

★

Poetry

COLLECTED POEMS
THE THRACIAN STRANGER

Drama

KRISHNA KUMARI
ATONEMENT
THREE EASTERN PLAYS

Fiction

AN INDIAN DAY
THESE MEN THY FRIENDS
NIGHT FALLS ON SIVA'S HILL
IN ARABY ORION

Essays and Belles-Lettres

CITHAERON DIALOGUES
CRUSADER'S COAST

History

A HISTORY OF INDIA
(in *Benn's Sixpenny Library*)
SUTTEE
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF INDIA

A LETTER FROM INDIA

BY

EDWARD THOMPSON

LONDON
FABER & FABER LIMITED
24 RUSSELL SQUARE

1932

FIRST PUBLISHED IN MCMXXXII
BY FABER AND FABER LIMITED
24 RUSSELL SQUARE LONDON W.C.1
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY LATIMER TREND AND CO PLYMOUTH

TO

GEOFFREY GARRATT

Well, wind-dispersed and vain the words will be!
Yet, Thyrsis. . . .
let me give my grief its hour.

'They tell me, Mr. Thompson, that you have published a book entitled *A Farewell to India*?'

'That is so, Mahatmaji.'

'Well, it seems to me that you have been wasting your time again. How do you think that you are ever going to say farewell to India? You are India's prisoner.'

PREFACE

For the Rhodes Trustees I investigated possibilities of co-operation between Indian and British writers; and I acted as Special Correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* in India, during the first three months of this year.

Part of the substance of this book appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*: the Jalianwalabagh paper and that on the vernacular literatures in the *Spectator*: the paper on fauna in *The Times*.

CONTENTS

A LETTER FROM INDIA

THE ARGUMENT

Mr. Gandhi's arrest was premature and a blunder: the Irwin-Gandhi Pact of 1931 was inadequate as well as surrounded by undesirable circumstances: further negotiation is inevitable and has been already too long delayed: the economic and social outlook in India is worse than disquieting, it is such as to make revolution and suffering almost certain: the immediate need is for government both more decided and more reckless.

Probably no democracy or colourable imitation of democracy could handle the affairs of India as they are. But the Government, not being Akbar or Henry VIII, should nevertheless in many matters act as if it were. It will have to settle the communal quarrel: and it would be wise to introduce provincial autonomy despite the opposition of the Moderates. Authority exercised solely repressively merely postpones while aggravating the explosion: authority exercised constructively has a chance of winning through.

Everywhere the civilized governments, whether in Europe or America, are striving desperately to hold the present system together while making the

minimum of unavoidable adjustments. The Round Table Conference committees have no mandate for such wide and radical changes as India must have, if a break-up is not to be made unavoidable. These committees are working in an artificial peace which with luck may be kept for another two years until the new Constitution is ready, but will be shattered the moment that Constitution is put into practice. It is folly to imagine that we can keep the real opposition in jail until we have done our arguing and exploration, and that then they can be released and trusted or expected to work a scheme (however wise) formed while they were incarcerated. If we do not negotiate we may as well prepare for a system of police and military rule sitting over alleged self-government, which can have no period except that which will be set to it by admitted failure in the end.

Negotiation accompanied by the freest examination of every aspect of Indian affairs must come. There are dangers in this course and many reasons why we should dislike the thought of taking any decided action in any direction except against our declared enemies. But whether we wish it or not we shall have no choice but to take it. And where there is no choice the question of danger becomes irrelevant.

Native States. That they might know the worst, I used to write 'Special Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*'. I dropped all these practices presently, since the only result was two heavy scoldings for association with a notoriously sinful paper. There seemed to me small sense in the scoldings, since I suppose few journalists ever came to India less inclined to add to the Government's difficulties. I had genuinely forgotten how resentful of criticism the Secretariats are; I thought of the *Manchester Guardian* as a paper whose honesty and desire to be just were acknowledged, and of myself as a typical Englishman with a reasonably patriotic record. After several unfortunate experiences I wrote direct to Delhi, and the response was a handsome apology for one of these experiences and facilities for which I was very grateful.

The matter is of importance only because Government complains that it gets an unfair press, not only in India but outside. This bad press is its own fault. The Delhi Secretariat acknowledged to me that their publicity was exceedingly bad, but that they could not see how to remedy it. It could be remedied by greater frankness. For example, the North-West Frontier Province, a storm-centre, exercises a pretty thorough censorship. No one is such a

fool as to post in Peshawar a letter he wants delivered inside of a week; as a result everyone, whatever his political views, accepts what he is officially told about the Red Shirt troubles with reservations and general scepticism. The Indian Government, nevertheless, prosecuted two papers for publishing a statement which was merely an unfortunate guess (I do not justify it, I merely wonder why the papers were such fools, with better material authentic, as to invent it, or why the Government selected it for prosecution when it was so dangerously close to actual truth), that Abdul Ghaffar Khan's house had been razed to the ground and the plough passed over it. This was a lie. But it *might* have happened, since a good many other houses have been burnt. Most people in India now, despite the elaborate precautions of the N.W.F.P. administration, backed up by the Central Government, believe that (as one of the finest and fairest-minded Englishmen put it to me) 'the hand of the Government has been pretty heavy on the Frontier'. Instead of jumping on two obscure papers, why did Government not say, brazenly, 'Yes, we *have* been burning houses, and we did it for this reason'? After all, the burning has been done deliberately, with argument and a policy behind it. Why should it be

expected that even a constant meddling with private letters will prevent it being ultimately known—and known with much exaggeration? Also, all reasonable people admit that the Frontier is an exceptional problem, even if not quite so entitled to be a law to itself as is claimed. Then, take the shooting in the Hijli detention camp and the Chittagong reprisals. My own feeling is that if ever reprisals were understandable the Chittagong ones were; and that the Hijli shooting was justified. That the reprisals were bad is undeniable; and it has been admitted to me by what I regard as the best authority possible in this instance, that the Congress Report on them was the most honest and accurate report Congress has ever drawn up. 'There wasn't much in it that you could say was wrong. You see, they had plenty of material for once, and there was no need to invent.' Yet in both episodes the Government have a case. Their story, as it was told to me, is a good defence, to those who are not going to be pedantic where much provocation has been endured. I think that if the kind of straightforward account that was given me in confidence had been published there would be little fuss, even in India, over what happened. Instead of this, they have allowed opinion in Bengal to become hysterical over exaggerated stories that

have been given the field to themselves. You can suppress publication of your own side and proscribe publication of the hostile side. But you cannot prevent rumour going from mouth to mouth. It is not a question of what the incorrigibly unfriendly will say or believe; I am thinking of moderate men and women, who recognize the necessity of keeping some sort of order and are unwilling to make even an alien Government's task impossible. These men and women could be conciliated and encouraged, whereas I found them infuriated over Hijli and Chittagong. Three recent episodes, these and the Kohat affair, have raised bitter resentment against the Administration. Yet in two of them the Government, so far as I could find, were justified; and as to Chittagong, well, what happened was wrong, but it is surprising that most of it had not happened long before. Another obvious error in tactics is the arresting of people without saying why they were arrested.

I return to my narrative.

The audience were compensated for our muzzling, when the curtain should have risen on the fine scene where the heroine abducts the hero. It rose, instead, on an interlude of quieter loveliness: Jayakar

and I, in chairs, confronted the spectators (who accepted this, as Indian playgoers accept anything, as a proper part of the show). The playwright spoke impassionedly about my works and present mission; we were garlanded and dismissed to be regaled with soda-water. After this pleasing incident we saw the play to the end.

Mira Ben (Miss Slade) called; and suggested (not, I think, very hopefully) that it might do much good if I led a procession, addressed a protest meeting, and went to prison. This would have meant 'publicity', which editors, unwilling to pay me money, have sometimes offered as a far more desirable recompense; no doubt an unpopular author can do with publicity. And garlands would have been forthcoming from quarters that have more than once registered grief at my share in the Indian controversy. ('The general impression', an austere person considered himself entitled to tell me, 'is that you have been lending Government a pretty good hand of late.') But I put temptation aside, having just heard the sad story of an Indian lady renowned for beauty and charm, 'instead of which' she goes about the country making speeches, and her ten-year-old son laments, 'Mother goes to jail and thinks of nothing but garlands, neglecting me!'

Mira Ben continued, reasonably enough, that I was seeing the wrong people, staying with the wrong people. She waved a hand over the prospect of the ocean far below Malabar Hill. 'This is not the real India. If you knew the villages . . . if you knew the real India . . . if you met the Indians who are the real Indians. . . .' I am not as ignorant of the villages perhaps, as she supposed, for I have worked through months of famine or flood in the poorest district of Bengal (than which destitution can scarcely go further). But I do not know them with intimacy. Jayakar, who (despite his success at the Round Table Conference) has regrettable lapses in language, observed, 'I call it damned cheek of an Englishwoman to say she knows my country better than I do.' But Mira Ben was very good and sent me all the last issues of *Young India* before it had been closed down. She arranged a meeting with a group of Congress workers who three days later were all but two (Mira Ben, who has gone since, and Father Elwin) in prison.

These Congress workers, some of whom I knew already, were men and women of high purity of spirit. Where we differed I saw (or thought I saw) why we differed. I feel entitled to criticize them in one point only, that when they found I wanted to ask

questions they shut up like clams. Several times I protested. 'I've been talking frankly to you. But you won't say a word in return.' Once I said, 'Do you think I am a Government spy?' 'No,' replied Mr. Gandhi's son. 'Government's resources have been so strained that we do not think they can afford any more spies.'

I told them that Mr. Gandhi's first telegram to the Viceroy struck me as hectoring and sarcastic (in its wonder whether he was expected still to attend at Delhi 'for guidance'. I did Mahatmaji injustice, for when I read Mr. Emerson's Minutes of his 1931 talks with Mr. Gandhi, it was clear that the latter had been seeing Mr. Emerson expressly to learn how Government expected Congress to behave).

Mira Ben exclaimed, 'Then you accuse Bapu of untruthfulness!'

'No.'

'But you accused him of sarcasm!'

'I did. No one, not even Tagore, has a better command of the English tongue. I have heard him sometimes using it with a deft mischief that to me, an Englishman, has been very delightful.'

'You *do* accuse him of untruthfulness! Sarcasm! Deftness! Mischief! Sarcasm is untruthfulness!'

'Not at all. There is no man I admire more than

Gilbert Murray. But he remembers Hamlet's remark that:

A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear,

and he, like Mr. Gandhi, often says things that to a dull listener mean one thing, and to another with intelligence carry a very jolly secondary meaning. This is not untruthfulness; we call it irony. It is what Providence intended when it foresaw the English language.'

I touched on picketing: if despite propaganda people wanted to sell or buy foreign goods, they should be free to do so. They rebutted this with the illustration of a war—would not British people fighting for their existence, as against Germany, put every kind of pressure on those who refused to fight? 'No. In the Great War we had young women who took it upon themselves to decide what men, even men they did not know, should do; they used to give white feathers to those who were not in khaki. Many of us resented this sort of thing exceedingly. We considered it was damned impertinence.'

Next, the British feeling about the Bengal murders. 'Well, *you* do not mind mass-assassination!' And: 'Poor Bengal! She has been so humiliated, so insulted, that she has been goaded into this. Would

innocent young girls respectably brought up have done such a deed as that Comilla one, unless they had been maddened beyond endurance? You can tell how intolerable the situation has become when a thing like that is done—by women!'

'If my countrymen', I retorted, 'break out and paint Calcutta red, why should we not say: "Poor European community! It has been so threatened and so murderously used that it has been goaded into this." Would a notoriously law-abiding people like the British have done such a thing unless conditions had become intolerable?'

The seeker after truth, however earnest, irritates those who have won it. He 'breaks the heaven of their repose'. Mira Ben with a loud cry flung herself full-length on the stone veranda, thrust a pillow under her head and snuggled into it. She found me tedious.

One thing, and one thing only, they told me. When I persisted that Congress was in communication with the terrorists ('But in that case they are not followers of Bapu. For everyone who follows Bapu is strictly non-violent'), they first said that Congress in Bengal paid scant heed to Congress elsewhere; and then challenged me to name a single Congressman, even in Bengal, who was in with the assassins.

I named one; and they said, 'But do you know that at the last meeting of the Working Committee everyone, including Mahatmaji, gave him a dreadful talking to?'

I went, *multis bonis* very far from *flebilis*. They 'counted me out' as hopelessly lost. But they did me wrong. I was not beyond persuasion, and in the weeks that followed I grew increasingly sympathetic with the Congress point of view, though this was in spite of Congress and by no means thanks to it. They did, however, urge me to watch them picketing the Bombay bazaar. Mira Ben repeatedly reminded me: 'You must do your job for the *Manchester Guardian*.' She was quite right. So we arranged for the only time I had free, two days later, when I should be returning from Poona. Mrs. Perrin and Mrs. Captain, the grand-daughters of Dadabhai Naoroji, very kindly said they would meet the train and take me along with them. It so happened that I could not get my Poona work done in twenty-four hours; I had to stay a second day to meet the *Bhārata Itihāsa Mandala* (Indian Historical Society). I wired back accordingly that I should be a day later, but should like to watch the picketing on that day instead. Unfortunately, the very day I originally promised to come was the day when the police

arrested the two ladies: had I been watching their operations no doubt I should have been 'jugged' as well, as Dr. Paton was in Madras. It did not occur to me until it was suggested to me, some weeks later, that my defection on the morning of the arrest undoubtedly would be proof to my Congress friends that I was in the secrets of the police. The circumstantial evidence is all against me. Yet my necessity to stay over in Poona was genuine, and if they had not been arrested I should have come into the bazaar with them the next day.

Leaving Bombay, I became a ghost drifting between the three points of Bombay, Peshawar and Calcutta. In the cities I had to address many meetings. From the wireless news on shipboard I had expected to find bitterness everywhere; I found only kindness. There was no shadow of hostility even when a University Union, who had invited me to tea, asked me through their President: 'And now, sir, we should like to hear your views on whether monogamy has been a success in the West.' My thoughts went back to the question of one of my own students in Bengal, a dozen years ago, a question asked without the slightest intention to be offensive: 'Sir, *is* there such a thing as a chaste woman in the West?' I answered that I thought monogamy

worked pretty well. 'Then why do we hear of so many divorces?'

Many reasons are given for the low estimation in which Europe and (even more) America are held in India. The reason beyond reasons, without doubt, is Hollywood.

Active Congress workers were unfortunately soon all in jail. But I could see any other Indian I wished, and saw hundreds. I saw also the Viceroy and his counsellors, many officials and many unofficial Englishmen, Princes and their ministers. I have hardly ever written anything on Indian politics without wondering if the opposite were not true. I am weary of this ungainly destiny thrust upon me, and now know that only when truth is cast in an imaginative form has it any integrity. If I were to set down my convictions and expectations as regards India they would seem unrelievedly dark. Mr. Keynes has spoken of himself as being Cassandra; but he has at least been Cassandra prophesying on themes that interest people.

Indians resent the argument that Britain has a 'trust' in India. I do not use it, and many other Englishmen have ceased to use it. Yet the only thing worth striving for is to lessen human suffering; and an abrupt departure of the British from India,

which I wish to God were possible, would cause very great suffering, though we should be the gainers in everything but self-respect. I hope now to be out of the controversy for ever, having set down things as they come to me after a very various journey in which I did my best to understand all I could.

II

ANTE BELLUM

Had Congress stood out, irreconcilably, for absolute independence, it would have been consistent if unpractical. But through Mr. Gandhi it negotiated and accepted the Delhi Pact of 1931, which the Government claims it made no effort to keep.

By the courtesy of the Central Government I was allowed to go through the Reports of the provincial governments on the course of action pursued by Congress after the Pact was made. These statements showed that the temporary unification of India, prepared for by British rule and consolidated by political agitation and activity, especially since the War, is breaking up, as the Roman Empire broke up into the nations of Europe. Bengal and Bombay, Madras and the Punjab, are different countries, yearly growing into a wider disparateness.

The Madras Government had no real complaint,

and printed merely a drowsy, laconic grumble. This had been edited before it appeared; even so, it is clear that there was no great matter to urge. Congress could, perhaps, say as much in countercharge. In Bihar, the Punjab and Central Provinces, were bad patches; and Gujarat in the Bombay Presidency was very bad, as were some Deccan centres. The really hostile provinces were three: Bengal, the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province. The Bengal Government's statement abounds in detailed and dated quotations that straightforwardly incited to murder, often in phraseology recalling the Partition days, unequivocal recommendations to sacrifice of 'white goats', and so on. In the N.W.F.P. the Red Shirts organised by Abdul Ghaffar Khan (whom it is usual to refer to affectionately as 'A.G.K.'), went steadily forward with a subversive campaign on both sides of the border. In the U.P., more resolutely than anywhere else except Gujarat, Congress unceasingly strove to establish itself as a parallel administration, or at least to make for itself a privileged and special position. It may have acted in good faith to this extent, that its members regarded themselves as possessed of local knowledge and as being the poor man's friend and advocate. I do not think there is

much in this. Congress (and we cannot blame it) has always had an excellent eye for places and controversies where Government is at a disadvantage. An American who is no friend to the Government said to me: 'I am as much in sympathy with the Congress as anyone could be. But I do think that they did a mean thing in starting the no-rent campaign in the U.P. at this juncture.' He added (which explains his statement): 'No doubt you are right about Congress making no effort to keep the Pact in Bengal and the N.W.F.P. But these are mere flashes in the pan. It is in the U.P. that the real revolution is coming.' This is because the U.P. peasant is under a system which has claims to be held one of the most iniquitous in the world. As another American (resident in the Punjab) remarked: 'Whenever I have crossed the Jumna I breathe freely. I feel I have passed again into a country of free men.' India has hitherto escaped a peasants' rising, a 'green revolution'; it may be preparing in the U.P.

The provincial governments' statements contain much trivial matter, better omitted. Mr. Gandhi's own speeches whenever reported are unexceptionable, and can have been quoted only for the sake of completeness. Several times Congress's success in persuading people to compound squabbles, instead

of letting them be settled legitimately by costly wrangling and false witness in the courts, is noted with indignation. Officialdom seems unaware of the growing shame felt by Englishmen for the abomination of the litigation system we have clamped down on India. Fifty years on from now, this may be considered the worst wrong we ever did her, even though it was done in good faith. If Congress can side-step three-fourths of it, Congress is doing great service—is doing it even to Government, in testing out in advance a way of relieving the State of a lot of tedious and trivial tasks now laboriously and expensively and badly performed by it.

Great play is made with Congressmen's statements that there was only a truce and that powder should be kept dry in case of a breakdown; in these, most people would see nothing unnatural or objectionable. Special stress is laid on the continual references of some (Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was a prime offender) to the necessity of preserving intact 'the war mentality'. This is a catchword and verges on bad faith; still, it gets more indignation than it merited. In any case, no one should have supposed that Mr. Nehru would welcome a real peace on the Pact basis ('I am afraid there is no doubt that that young man wants to fight,' a near relation of his

said to me). On the Government side, too, were those who regarded the Pact without enthusiasm and kept their feelings and their powder both safe from any moisture.

Mr. Emerson (Secretary, Indian Government, Home Department) allowed me to read also through the minutes of his private talks with Mr. Gandhi in the period between the conclusion of the Pact and the latter's going to London. I am precluded from quotation, but perhaps may be permitted to say that both parties showed up honourably, as scrupulously resolute to stand by their side of the promises. Mr. Emerson repeatedly noted that he found Mr. Gandhi anxious to go beyond the letter of his engagement; he observed that Mr. Gandhi sometimes refrained from putting forward a request that was expected from him, because he was unwilling to ask more than the Pact rigidly interpreted gave him.

When Mr. Gandhi went to London, Congress, Government asserts, proceeded to consolidate its position and prepare for war. Congress circles do not deny this, contenting themselves with the retort that Government also consolidated its position and got ready to attack. Otherwise, how could that attack have come so vigorously, so suddenly, so effectively? 'Those Ordinances were not the work

of overnight. They were prepared to the last detail.'

MR. GANDHI IN LONDON

I sympathize with a Member of Parliament's outburst: 'I'll never go across the street to hear Gandhi again.' At the Round Table Conference, Mr. Gandhi was irritating and futile. As the heroine of a now-forgotten early Victorian novel observed of Providence, "is ways were strange, and sometimes 'ardly sensible';

He moved in a mysterious way,
His blunders to perform.

He insisted on playing a lone hand, in isolation from other Hindus, even from men of the proved ability, integrity and patriotism of Sapru, Sastri and Jayakar. His speeches, rambling, inconsequent, twisted and teasingly ambiguous, were a shock when they followed on those of any one of a dozen other Delegates. Crowning blunder of all, he antagonized the depressed classes, those impressively known as 'the untouchables' (a leading Sydney paper always refers to them, seriously, as 'the impossibles'). The signal new fact of the last year has been their emergence, which has shaken the Hindus as Muslim opposition never did. Mr. Gandhi gravely underesti-

mated the ability and tenacity of their political leader, Dr. Ambedkar.

His failure was more than political. It was spiritual. We had expected a John the Baptist; we saw a *bunia*,[1] in close alliance with other *bunias* (who claimed to be nothing more)—this was what people felt.

It is hard for me to say this; and I will not let it stand without qualification. My admiration never went to uncritical extremes, and in essentials it remains unchanged. I ask indulgence while I think things out.

His unique strength as a politician comes from his almost inhuman self-possession. He is all collected, he is never caught unaware. In England, however, he made the mistake which all men of supreme spiritual genius have tried to avoid, he let himself be overworked. For example, he reached Oxford on Saturday, at mid-day; he met people in the afternoon and addressed the Majlis (Indian students' debating union) in the evening. Next morning he spent with us on Boars Hill, bringing with him Dutta, Mira Ben, and C. F. Andrews; he endured a three hours' heckling from the Masters of Balliol

[1] *Huckster* will give the meaning.

and University, Gilbert Murray, P. C. Lyon and Reginald Coupland—a reasonably exacting ordeal. I can still hear Lindsay's tones pleading with him (as Cromwell pleaded with Lindsay's own people): 'Mr. Gandhi! *please* think it possible that you may be mistaken!' To me, watching and listening, Mahatmaji seemed very game and gallant. Before this, while Mira Ben and Andrews were breakfasting with us, he (having taken his dates and goat's milk at Balliol) was supposed to be accomplishing his daily spinning quota in front of our drawing-room fire. My wife found him fallen asleep over his *charka*; he looked up with a start, smiled, and said: 'I—wished to work. But these'—pointing to his fingers—'went to sleep.' After Lindsay, Sadler, Coupland, Lyon and Murray had done with him, he had to see Sir Henry Lawrence about a franchise scheme; in the afternoon he met a group of younger dons; at night he addressed the Raleigh Society.

A great Indian said to me, recently: 'He is moral. But not spiritual.' I hesitated as to whether *ethical* was not a juster word than *moral*.

Mr. Gandhi will live as one of the very few who have set the stamp of an idea on an epoch. His 'non-violence' has not only given a unique quality to the Indian struggle (powerfully drawing out the sym-

pathy of the outside world). It has set a reciprocal quality on the British 'repression' of that struggle. At our house he emphasized the honour that would be India's if she won freedom without recourse to violence. I replied that it would be an equal distinction for my own people. The world has never before seen such forbearance as has been exercised (and I know all about the episodic violence and brutality that have chequered this forbearance) by

An old and haughty nation nursed in arms—

and nursed, moreover, in a long tradition of power and authority. He appeared not to get my point. But, surely, it will be a victory for both sides (and there can be no other 'victory' in this queer battle), if India secures a peaceful passage to freedom. Garlands will be due to us, no less than to India. We shall not receive them, of course, which is just as well. They would be embarrassing to a people unaccustomed to them.

Charlie Andrews commented to me on the deep deterioration of the *satyāgraha* movement in India, compared with that in South Africa. 'It is nothing like as pure.' 'Non-violence', for a great while past, has usually been nonsense. If a College Principal on reaching his office finds an Indian lady seated

against the door defying him to budge her (a journalist standing by to broadcast his unchivalrousness and vicious brutality if he tries)—if an incongruous alliance of bazaar women, ladies just emerged from purdah, and girls between six and ten years of age, lie on the paths by which students must come to their lectures—if a shopkeeper who wishes to supply British goods to people who wish to buy them is made socially miserable—you may call all this 'non-violence', of course. But you must travel eight thousand miles west of India to find anyone except M. Rolland who agrees with you. Of the long patience and great achievement of the National Congress I have spoken elsewhere, plainly and with strong admiration. But Congress last December was an insolent and intolerant faction.

It is perhaps true that Mr. Gandhi is still the main defence against a bloody outbreak. Certainly he has exercised a restraining influence on his followers. But the last few years have seen him growingly egocentric, increasingly tolerant of lapses from the incredibly lofty ideals associated with his name. He is not the man he was.

THE ITALIAN INTERVIEW

It will be remembered that on his way to India

an interview with Mr. Gandhi was reported by an Italian journalist. Mr. Gandhi was represented as saying that the Round Table Conference had been 'the parting of the ways', and that he was going to India to launch civil disobedience once more. Civil disobedience had already been all but launched, in the U.P. no-rent campaign and the all-round truculence of 'A.G.K.' and his Red Shirts. This interview shocked the world, and Mr. Gandhi's denial shocked it even more, for many familiar with his writings and manner of talking thought the tone and expression unmistakably his. His denial was so resented in Italy that an official assurance was privately sent that the journalist involved understood English perfectly and was of an honesty above suspicion; also, that Mr. Gandhi had said much the same things to another person in Italy, who has great fame with the world. In Lahore, a Muslim leader who had been uneasily hedging on the question of the authenticity of the interview drew me aside from a group of American friends, and said: 'I cannot speak frankly before those foreigners. But we Muslims know that he is capable of infinite duplicity.' Another Muslim leader was even more ruthlessly direct: 'He is a liar.' Sikh leaders summed up more charitably: 'We believe he said those things, but per-

haps not in that way. And probably he did not give an *interview*.' No episode in his whole career has done his reputation graver harm. Unless it is cleared up, he will not be regarded in Continental Europe as a saint again. It was part of the reason why his arrest was taken so quietly in India.

Mr. Gandhi is less often taken at a disadvantage than any other public man. There is his dæmonic self-possession; there is the fact that Mr. Mahadev Desai takes down every word he utters. Both Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Desai are in prison. If the one could explain and the other could publish his notes, I believe the cruder judgments could not stand. We must remember that no proof of the interview was submitted to him; and without this an interview should never be printed. Meantime it is worth noting that the British seem to be the only people who deal much in qualifications—an Englishman whose words are reported without their qualifications feels misrepresented, whereas to people of more direct and lucid habits of thought and speech—French or Americans, for example—those qualifications are apt to seem teasing and quibbling. Indians have picked up this trick from us, and Mr. Gandhi more than any other Indian. In the highest official circles in India it is held that while the substance of

the interview was probably correctly reported the interviewer missed, and in good faith omitted, important qualifications.

Miss Muriel Lester, who was Mr. Gandhi's hostess in London, has said that in Italy he did not see any journalist at all and that she was with him all the time. We cannot rule out the possibility of the whole episode having been faked. Something of the kind happened to Tagore when he was in Italy once. But as the matter now stands Mr. Gandhi's good faith is under suspicion more widespread than ever before. We ought to have his own account.

The practical mischief of the 'interview' was that it made official patience in India slump the quicker to the belief that he was juggling and quibbling and had no intention to co-operate. Many had already felt despair at what seemed an incorrigible tortuousness in his thought and arguments. Distrust was no new thing.

Jayakar's answer, when I told him how perplexed I felt and why, was: 'He is *elusive*. But there is no doubt that he is capable of the very highest forms of truth.' This reply is superb, and it came from a man who loves Gandhi and was once his close associate. 'He is capable of the very highest forms of truth.' When I am depressed by memory of that wretched

show in London, I remind myself of South Africa. There, in that struggle, he was great; it is one of the world's noblest stories of generous endurance of insult. Nor does it stand alone as an episode (one long-drawn-out) revealing the man's sublime stuff. 'He is moral: but not spiritual.' In South Africa he was both. Again, think of his famous trial in India; I am proud of both the races with whom my life has been spent, when I remember that scene when they came face-to-face, as foes, but as foes even in conflict exchanging kindness and respect. Then, after Jalianwala, there was a time when Jayakar and Gandhi together, on behalf of an angry people, drew up the Congress Report. They were enduring the provocation of those infamous debates in our Parliament (if I were an Indian I should never forgive those debates) and of the mean agitation that was whipping up subscriptions to the Dyer Testimonial. Detailed and circumstantial evidence (readily accepted in the fury of the moment) was pressed upon them, that General Dyer had 'lured' the crowd into the garden before he fired. It was sheer lying, but lying which had behind it the impetus of uncontrollable passion. Mr. Gandhi brushed it contemptuously aside, brushed aside the insistence of his own people. Never was his self-possession more tri-

umphant; and self-possession in such circumstances is a high spiritual victory. Those who lived through the War will remember how hard it is to be shaken by indignation and patriotism and yet continue just. Mr. Gandhi achieved this, and achieved it under humiliation that has never been ours, that of belonging to a beaten-down nation. He proved himself 'capable of the very highest forms of truth', truth of action—not merely truth of speech—which is why Jayakar, who stood by his side then, loves and honours him through all political divergence.

THE ENDING OF THE PACT

The provincial governments, Mr. Gandhi being still in London, grew more and more insistent that the Central Government should take action to end an intolerable state of affairs and declare Congress an illegal body. Mr. Gandhi's personal loyalty is one of his most lovable traits. He had unequivocally signified that under any circumstances he should take the arrest of 'A.G.K.' as a *casus belli*. With the advent of the National Government, British opinion in England had taken a turn far less favourable to India. The cabled report of the Italian interview stiffened British opinion in India and alienated much Indian sympathy, especially outside the Hin-

du community. The N.W.F.P. Government, perhaps the most insistent where every Government was insistent, demanded to be allowed to proscribe the Red-Shirt movement. It would be awkward, tactically, if this were done while Congress (whose leader was still a Conference delegate) was as yet unproscribed. Muslims would say: 'You proscribe a Muslim movement which has only recently sprung up, while you leave Congress, a mainly Hindu organization, to carry on, year in year out, a far more dangerous campaign.'

Government had already struck at both the Red Shirts and the Congress no-rent movements, when Mr. Gandhi, fresh from intimate colloquy with the Secretary of State (to whom he gave what his countrymen consider an unnecessary and unjustified testimonial—probably Indian opinion is unfair to Sir Samuel Hoare, but I have to state facts as I know them), reached Bombay. He was met by Congressmen with excited stories; and he made his concluding blunder. The Viceroy's patience snapped halfway through the interchange of telegrams that followed, while His Excellency was on a visit to the former capital of India. There are many, not all of them by any means of the Congress way of thinking, who ascribe the crash to 'the Calcutta atmosphere'.

Mr. Gandhi took up his old quarters in Yeravda jail.

Anyone who knows Mr. Gandhi has been struck by the fact that he never speaks unkindly of anyone whatsoever (except Macaulay). His gentleness evokes response in keeping. He is regarded by his jailors, as by many other Englishmen who hold perfectly correct opinions, with an affection that subsists easily alongside disapprobation of his political actions. 'The old man', I was told at Yeravda, a fortnight later, was perfectly happy. He was sleeping late in the morning, as late as eleven sometimes. 'He never gives any trouble. He always drops politics the moment he comes to us.' He had just expressed his deep sense of indebtedness to Almighty God who now, as on several former occasions, had arranged for him to be sent to prison just in time to prevent a breakdown.

By April he felt sufficiently rested to take up the study of economics, and accepted the Collector of Poona's observation that if he had done this earlier it would have saved much bother, with the enjoyment he always accords to a jest at his own expense.

We must turn to the political aspect of all this, and leave the personal.

III

OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES

Government won the opening round, given a great initial advantage by the tone of Mr. Gandhi's first telegram to the Viceroy:

'I was unprepared on landing yesterday to find Frontier and U.P. Ordinances, shootings in Frontier and arrests of valued comrades in both on top of Bengal Ordinance awaiting me. I do not know whether I am to regard these as an indication that friendly relations between us are closed or whether you expect me still to see you and receive guidance from you as to the course I am to pursue in advising Congress. I would esteem wire in reply.'

It is unnecessary to dwell on the impropriety of such a message to a much-harassed man. Except in extreme Congress circles, which refuse to think it possible that Mr. Gandhi may make a mistake, it is recognized that it contained, plainly, that claim to be a parallel (and ethically superior) Government

which the Viceroy is known to resent. Lord Willingdon's reply, characterized by *Young India*[1] as 'Viceroy's Conditions and Objections'—one Englishman told me he thought it 'sniffy', but surely some savour of austerity was natural?—seems to me patient and courteous. It pointed out that Mr. Gandhi's was only one of many 'political parties and sections of the public' with whom 'he and his Government desire to have friendly relations' and that Mr. Gandhi, as just arrived, was unacquainted with what had been happening in India. This brought a more sober and reasoned answer; but the note of mutual exasperation was set, and precipitated the disastrous ending of the period of co-operation. The Viceroy declined to discuss the Ordinances or to discuss anything at all under the shadow of a threat of civil disobedience. The Congress Working Committee decided on civil disobedience, and sent His Excellency a copy of the resolution. The rest followed as night follows day: the sudden but by no means unexpected arrival of the police, and hymn-singing as Mr. Gandhi prepared to depart with them. Congress became a proscribed body, its leaders and workers in jail. Government's ban took a sweep so wide as to prohibit even exhibitions of swadeshi products.

1 Mr. Gandhi's paper.

Both the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi had 'difficult constituencies' behind them. The latter did not wish to introduce civil disobedience, in most of his moods (and in his other moods he is now amenable) he was genuinely anxious to continue to co-operate. The former, in a land where every public man is sized up and analysed as happens nowhere else, is known to be absolutely devoid of racial prejudice and keen to push on the work of constitutional advance. No Indian objects to frankness in an Englishman; Lord Willingdon (who regards everyone he meets, Indian or British, as a fellow Etonian) speaks with a frankness which used to alarm his Administration (who have now given him up in despair as incorrigible), but is one of his greatest assets. The whole of India delights in it. He is a very gallant gentleman. But Mr. Gandhi had to conciliate his followers by a show of truculence; and the Viceroy is believed (rightly or wrongly) to be subjected to unprecedented dictation by a Secretary of State whose party are credited with no enthusiasm for Indian self-government. Lord Willingdon's Government persuaded themselves that by resolute action they could crush the Congress once for all. In the weeks that followed, all India became aware of this, and many who were weary of Congress and its

tactics, out of sheer resentment at seeing an advantage ruthlessly exploited became Congress sympathizers again. Meanwhile, intense activity persisted, in places Government surveillance could not easily reach.

The Viceroy, a modest man who rates his own qualities humbly, is determined not to go on with the method of government by conversations which Mr. Gandhi has invented and wants to see perpetuated. Mr. Gandhi's mind, politically, has never moved above the village level or, at widest, the subprovincial level—he is a Gujarati first and last. A cardinal and most exasperating error of the last dozen years in India has been the way politics and administration have been mixed up. Measures have rarely been taken on their merits, but generally for some opportunist reason. Mr. Gandhi ought to be told that administration and politics are different things, that administration simply has to go on while politics are thrashed out. It is intolerable that the Viceroy should be expected to sit down and argue for hours as to whether a villager in a Gujarat hamlet was or was not slapped by a policeman on a certain date. The tradition of direct access to the ruler is an invaluable possession and should be kept; for this very reason (and for other reasons) I hold

that the Viceroy was mistaken in refusing to see Mr. Gandhi. But in the future, Mr. Gandhi should show some sense of proportion, for Gujarat is not the whole of India.

The Viceroy, moreover, was tired of arguing with a man who flourishes a revolver, and whenever a hitch occurs is ready with the threat of civil disobedience. He does not regard his opponent as a saint at all, but as an extremely astute politician. He remembers him from 'pre-Mahatma' days, when he was a thorn in the side of the Bombay Government; there is rooted dislike in the memory. He holds that if he had accorded an interview Mr. Gandhi would have played with him while Congress thrust forward battle preparations. On personal as well as public grounds it is not unnatural that Lord Willingdon should have called the Congress bluff (for bluff it largely was). Yet it was a blunder not to see Mr. Gandhi, as it is a blunder not to permit negotiations since—which is going to be my *delenda est Carthago*.

As a problem India has got completely beyond the intimate and rigorous control which Government under an 'Ordinance' seeks to exercise. When Ordinance rule was imposed on it also, Bombay, a proud and wealthy city and one where relations between Indians and British have moved far

from the hatred and subservience and insolence (of both sides) that obtain in Calcutta, resented the fact (or what was felt to be the fact) that it was liable to be treated like a bad child, largely because Government has lost its temper with some part of India a thousand miles away. Both combatants need to be told that their technique of quarrelling is out of date. In Bombay, from a sense of loyalty to Mr. Gandhi men whose whole desire was passionately for peace and a continuance of the Round Table method went to prison with a reluctance that contained in it vexation with both sides. 'A curse on both your houses!' The Ordinance and lathi-charging system of administration is becoming maddening in provinces where so many Indians now count hundreds of Englishmen as their friends. Equally obsolete are Mr. Gandhi's obsessions with civil disobedience and with 'non-violent' picketing and boycotting. If they justified themselves in nothing else, the Round Table Conferences justified themselves by convincing their participators that they have a powerful section of well-wishers in Great Britain. The returned delegates have formed the habit of mutual consultation, which they are not likely to drop, and are becoming centres that spread the habit all over India.

IV

COURSE OF THE WAR

Ordinary European opinion—held more cautiously in official circles (outside the Central Secretariat)—was, and is, that Government by patient continuance in its repressive course could finish Congress once for all. There was much to support this view. Except in Bombay City, Gujarat and Bengal, there was (is) much apathy and weariness with the Congress programme, that has become so stereotyped and unimaginative and intolerant. Even in the U.P. feeling is beyond question less tense and exacerbated than during the former civil disobedience. Not all the Round Table Conference communal squabbling has prevented the emergence of a hope that, after all, the British people, possibly even the British Government, may mean business and that discussion is better than fighting. The older generation of ex-Congressmen are disillusioned and bored with strife. Most of the writers and other in-

tellectuals who are over thirty-five are on the side of a peaceful settlement.

Congress activity was driven underground. It flared out at Bombay, which was subjected to desperate mob violence. It will flare out elsewhere, though Bombay has peculiar conditions that make for violence. In the first place, it is probably the one city in India which has a lot of genuine communism; its labour movement is advanced in bitterness. It is a city of mixed population, Gujarati, Parsi and Maratha elements predominating. And though the older generation of Gujarati and Maratha intellectuals are for settlement by discussion, the students and the younger intellectuals are passionately against this.

If the Government were really as Machiavellian as its foes represent it as being, and really sought to 'divide and rule', it has two excellent new opportunities opening before it. One is that of the cleavage between Bombay and Ahmadabad. It is freely said that one main motive behind Congress agitation is to aggrandize Ahmadabad at Bombay's expense. There is a connected cleavage between the Gujarati and Maratha nations.

India is flanked by two storm-centres, Bengal and Gujarat; in each case, a knowledge of historical

antecedents will produce understanding and sympathy. For generations the Marathas plundered Gujarat, and the Gujaratis were a weak and subjugated people. Loyalty to Congress is intense among them, largely because in Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Patel Gujarat for the first time has thrown up public figures of front rank importance. It is something like the pride of North Wales in Mr. Lloyd George. It is the Gujaratis who in Bombay supply the most inflammable group. There is the beginning of a Maratha-Gujarati divergence (conflict is still too strong a word) which sometimes shows itself queerly. Maratha leaders of world reputation have expressed to me their resentment that Mr. Gandhi should have applied the word 'base' to the attempt of the Maratha student on Sir Ernest Hotson's life. 'What right had a Gujarati, who had eulogized Bhagat Singh, to use that word *base* of a Maratha boy who had merely attempted assassination?' There is no question that this resentment, whose absurdity is recognized by those who feel it, is genuine.

That student (Gogate), by the way, furnished another interesting example of the queer divorce from all sense of reality that marks the Indian terrorist. When examined by a British magistrate he was asked if he had any complaints as regards his

treatment. At first he said he had none. Then he said angrily: Yes, he had been very badly treated. He was invited to be categorical, and his charges were noted down. They were three: he had been refused the use of his own brass vessels, his family had not been allowed to send him in food (lest it should contain poison), and he had been 'grossly insulted' by the Nizam's police (he was a resident in the Nizam's dominions). Pressed for further information under the third head, at last he said that a sub-inspector of police had called him 'a Mohurrum tiger'. In the Mohurrum festival the young who are sportively inclined sometimes dress up as tigers and terrify the timid or weak-sighted by hiding under bushes. He had been told he was a sham terrorist and not the successful article! The same utterly undeveloped sense of fact shows in the annoyance of the two girls who at Comilla perpetrated the meanest assassination India has seen. Prison quarters had proved a disappointment, and when sentenced they shouted indignantly: 'It is better to die than to live in a stable.' It does not seem to have occurred to them that a Government of their own people may provide a third alternative more disturbing still, in the agonies of establishing its position in a country where political assassination has flourished so long;

we have seen the ruthlessness of an Irish Government. I am not speaking rhetorically. Like most Indians and Englishmen who have tried to take into account the whole of the facts, I believe that literally anything may happen in India before my generation passes.

To linger a moment on the Maratha-Gujarati severance, it emphasizes the sheer necessity of doing all that circumstances permit in revision of India's preposterous territorial divisions. These divisions break up racial and linguistic groups and fling them into unnatural fusion with other fragments. Innumerable causes of friction and disturbance arise, which in Bombay have happened to take an anti-Government course.

In many British historians, Vincent Smith for one, there is a prejudice against the Marathas. I admire them perhaps more than any other Indian nation and have close friendships with their leaders. But there was a time when I shared this prejudice, before it was dissipated by knowledge of the humanity and decency of their record and outlook. They are a people of spare and muscular physical carriage, the result both of choice and of stern natural conditions; they bear themselves like free men and women, which indeed they are. Their women (to their im-

mense advantage) have been free of purdah; and the Marathas never knew such orgies of cruelty as were seen in the widow-sacrifices of Rajasthan and Bengal and the hinduized Sikh kingdom of Ranjit Singh. A century or more ago we had in India some of the finest spirits we have sent to its service: such men as Sir John Malcolm, the earlier Metcalfe and Tod. A Rajput-Maratha quarrel existed, we were forced to take the Rajput side, and an anti-Maratha bias, justified then, came into our histories. Let me take the liberty of quoting Mr. Macmillan, our Collector at Poona (1932), who has worked among them for thirty years. 'They are the most reasonable people in the world. Their village people are as hard-headed as Scotsmen. You can explain anything you like to them; and they will listen, they will take the trouble to understand your point of view. And they do not shut up their minds when something involving religion crops up.' If the present quarrel were between the British and the Marathas only, I believe we could settle it to-morrow.

This is an irrelevance, excusable because I owe this people reparation for earlier injustice to them.

The Indian Government prosecutes its controversies on an unreal basis, continually presenting its

opponents with a moral advantage to which they are not entitled. Mr. Gandhi was locked up without an interview,

Unhouseled, unanointed, unannealed.

Quite possibly, in another week, even after an interview, his arrest would have been unavoidable (and in that case how strong would have been Government's position, morally as well as tactically!). But the abrupt closure of discussion was wrong. Mr. Sen Gupta was arrested as he reached Bombay, which was several blunders at once, for no one supposes that he was of an importance to justify the compliment of such high-handed action. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru was given a long term of imprisonment for leaving his home town without orders, a procedure that recalls King Solomon's dealings with Shimei.

There are countries with an extensive Asiatic Empire, who, faced by political activity of a kind that in India has long been accepted as mild and entirely constitutional, promptly shoot and hang it out of existence, and inform the outside world that it was 'communism'. If you call a thing communism, you can do what you like to it, and get away with it. (American Women's Clubs, which have suffered

such distress by the spectacle of England's wickedness, never vex themselves about these other Colonial Empires). The Indian Government, faced by murderous organizations, prosecutes their members anachronistically, for such crimes as 'proposing to wage war against the King-Emperor', 'seeking to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty over India', for 'high treason and conspiracy'. It has invented a form of martyrdom which is mostly garlands for its more distinguished practitioners. Rigorous imprisonment can be meted out to the little people; nothing serious can be done to people taken up merely because in another week they are likely to be mischievous.

In a talk with Sir Charles Tegart, before I left for India, I put this point of view. He agreed, and said that it had often been pressed upon him that the Indian trouble was 'communism', a word of magical powers, charming those who hear it into an incapacity for any sort of thinking or any emotion except ferocity. 'But there *is* some communism,' I said. 'Yes. Some. But not in Bengal. And, anyway, it isn't a major factor. And I will not' (said he sturdily) 'call a thing communism when it isn't communism, just to get a political advantage.' This is the Englishman as I like to think he is, willing to lose

the game rather than say one word other than he believes. I am sorry Sir Charles Tegart is an Irishman.

But this does not touch the uneasiness that any decent Englishman feels when he reads of Indians being prosecuted, with at least the theoretical chance of capital punishment, for 'high treason' and the rest of the absurd crimes I have listed. If a man takes to bomb and revolver and forfeits his life, I for one feel no more compunction than I do when I see a man who has been picking at jumping balls caught in the slips. But the latter goes down in the score-list as 'caught', not as 'having tried to score from balls that were not on the leg side'. It is damnable that assassins should be prosecuted as patriots and for cherishing natural and certainly not immoral desires. This Sir Charles Tegart justified thus: 'You can never get the real people behind a murder. The only way you can get at them at all is by running a conspiracy case.' But in England a man who is accessory to a murder can be prosecuted as a murderer.

The Bengal Ordinance contains threats (such as that of putting to death for the attempt to murder, even if the attempt is unsuccessful) which will never be carried out unless in an uncivilized and unsettled

region such as the Border. These provisions were included to placate the European community of Calcutta. They give the Government a reputation for ferocity without the advantages of ferocity.

V

BENGAL

Bengal's isolation is extreme. Bombay and Calcutta, in their Indian even more than their European sections, know little of each other; you hear in both the most grotesque judgments. Bengal hardly knows the politicians who influence the rest of India. The National Congress in Bengal coheres loosely, and often rebelliously, to Congress elsewhere. The Bengali Moderates count for nothing; they have no names to put beside those of Sastri, Sapru, Jayakar, Moonje, Joshi, Ambedkar, Kelkar and a dozen others. The same isolation obtains between the province and the Centre. Delhi is out of touch with the country of which it is the administrative head. But great Moderate leaders from Bombay and Madras do exercise some sort of influence at it. Bengal, so far as Delhi is concerned, is a foreign country.

Annoyance with Bengal is general, and has some

justification. The people are hypersensitive, and inclined to be ungenerous in judgment, so that in this respect they contrast unfavourably with such people as the Marathas and Punjabis. Misrepresentation flowers quickly and widely and does not wither easily. Sentences or even half-sentences are unscrupulously quoted, and by journalists who have a reputation for honesty, so as to convey a slanderous impression. The people are excessively suspicious, especially in their present mood, and see sinister purpose in the most accidental actions. There is, for example, resentment of the praise given to Sir Hasan Suhrawardy for grappling with Sir Stanley Jackson's assailant. It is claimed that a Hindu was actually quicker off the mark, but the Government wishes to set the two communities by the ears by praising a Muslim!

Bengal opinion has some features setting it apart from that of the rest of India. It has always an emotional quality; reason is never pure. I have mentioned Sir Stanley Jackson's assailant; her defence, which English papers hardly referred to and quoted slightly and dismissingly, made a deep impression. Deliberate injustice is seen in our casual treatment of it, whereas the plain truth is, to the Englishman it would hardly appear a serious document. I take

myself to be the typical John Bull; I read it carefully and was left quite unmoved by the accused's preoccupation with and idealization of herself (even if it was only a conventional idealization—all women are theoretically possessed of certain virtues and will no doubt remain so to the end) when she asked the Court to share her astonishment that a respectable and gentle person like herself should have become so 'unsexed' as to attempt assassination. But it has to be recognized that much which a hardened outside world regards indifferently is spoken sincerely and heard sympathetically. Bengal would not see anything grotesque even in Bina Das's description of her aim as being 'the sacrifice of a son of England and of a daughter of India'.

One understands her statement that she had brooded over her sister's imprisonment; I know that she spoke the truth when she stressed the indignation felt over events of which the British public has not heard, or has scarcely heard. I know, too, that the statement was not her own composition. But she accepted it and its view-point; and that view-point was in large part Bengali, and not Indian, far less universal.

Mr. Gandhi's own explanation of the phenomenon of terrorism is that the British have for genera-

tions called Bengalis cowards—he is particularly cross with a notorious passage in Macaulay—and that now Bengalis are out to prove the contrary. Bengal, as Sir Stanley Reed put it to me, raises a number of Ghazis, out to show how reckless they are. The Chittagong Armoury Raid, by its skill and daring, delighted many who do not approve of law-breaking but are glad to think that a new kind of Bengali has arisen.

There can be no question that the Ordinance is felt as a deep humiliation. This feeling deserves sympathy. The Bengal Government has not the slightest liaison with the intellectuals, who in Bengal are influential far more than in any other province. It is in touch with a many-sided problem—Bengal and the Bengali nation—at one point only, where administration impinges on those administered.

The Brahmo movement is dying, and a loss of morality has come over Bengal's public life. I can think of no historical parallel to the power wielded for nearly a century by the Brahmo Samaj. This tiny community has abounded in men and women of artistic genius of every kind. It has made Bengal intellectually, throwing up scores of leaders of outstanding gifts of mind and character and individuality. Many of these have been great absolutely as

well as comparatively, and under a happier political system would have touched more than their own province. (Yet, as it is, they left their impress on Bombay.) These leaders were most of them strongly puritan. There is only one word that seems to me to fit their record and quality, the word *noble*.

The Brahmos are passing, but their freedom of thought remains, and sets Bengal apart in India, for this freedom is not rough or ungainly; it moves imaginatively. With this freedom goes so much appreciation of our own intellectual life that friendship might have been built. The Englishman with intellectual interests may feel out of sympathy with the young Bengali modernists in a few matters of detail—they admire Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's War record, for example, and argue that it proves his strength of mind; and they have an exalted enthusiasm for Lord Russell. But if you meet them you cannot miss their wide knowledge, their great ability, their essential fairness, their personal attractiveness. The Government does not even suspect that this intensely active and almost ultra-modern Bengali world exists; it has not so much as heard that there *is* any Holy Ghost. As for my countrymen and countrywomen in Bengal, a sturdy race endowed with many virtues—they have built up the splendid

jute and tea trades, you can see them striding massively over the Barrackpur golf course—they are practical business people who encourage no bees in their bonnet. We do them grave injustice if we imagine that they would have wasted much thought on intellectual matters even if they had never left Dundee.

Bengali society is priding itself on its calmness and self-possession. There is not the unbalanced excitement, say Bengalis, which marked the Partition troubles or the last political crisis. But to an observer who comes to Bengal from any other province (the Gujarati parts of Bombay excepted) the middle and upper classes are tense and close to hysteria. There is deep indignation over the events at Chittagong and in the Hijli detention camp and over the Government resolve to keep the facts quiet, an indignation somewhat qualified by the unexpected leniency of the sentence passed on Bina Das (which is put down to the credit of Sir Stanley Jackson, whom she tried to murder) and by regret that the Comilla murderers picked out one of the very few officers regarded as genuinely sympathetic. Many Bengalis, Tagore especially, spoke to me of Stevens warmly as a personal friend. Rightly or wrongly, the new Governor is assumed to have been sent

because of a ruthless record in the Irish 'Black-and-Tanism'. Ireland's case has been an obsession and a curse to all India, to Bengal most of all. The people compare their own case with Ireland's, and believe that history parallels and repeats itself. It would be a splendid thing if Indians could forget Ireland for a single day. ('Sir Harry Vane! Sir Harry Vane! The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!') Everything seems to be gathering for an explosion in Bengal.

If the humiliated resentment of people who share our own modern outlook makes this explosion likely, the economic situation makes it certain. Take a motor car along the roads leading into Calcutta, two hours before dawn, when it is still pitch-black. The flooding of these roads with light from your lamps will show them crowded with meagre figures hurrying to their work. Even worse is the case of the many who can find no work to hurry to. A swarming populace inhabits miles of foetid hovels. The middle classes suffer most of all; the educated Bengali is increasingly finding himself not only unemployed but seemingly unemployable in his own province. I do not see how anything can save Bengal from revolution or civil war and massacre.

The only remedies suggested are elimination of the European from the services and the ending of

the Permanent Settlement. These remedies give us the measure of the Nationalists' thinking; Government, of course, cannot touch the economic distress, for its roots are in social habits and natural conditions. Both remedies together could affect only a small part of Bengal's distress; and the latter remedy is impossible so long as the most influential section of the nation—Congress—refuses to co-operate and both Congress and Moderates block the hurrying forward of complete provincial autonomy and insist that it must wait on responsibility at the centre.

We are continually told, especially by Sir Samuel Hoare, that the Government is firmly resolved to 'stamp out terrorism'. At Westminster or at Delhi this sounds very impressive; I wonder what the Bengal district officer thinks about it. Of course, you cannot stamp out terrorism. To do this, three things are necessary. First, you must enlist the active help of Congress, which is lukewarm about the murders, and in Bengal is (so Sir Samuel Hoare tells us, but has not been categorical, as he ought to be if Government really have the evidence) in communication with the murder gangs. Secondly, the racial estrangement which has made Bengal the open sore of India for a quarter of a century must be ended. There is no logic about some Englishmen; they will

accept lavish hospitality from an Indian Prince or from some leading politician at the Savoy Hotel, but do not see that if you accept hospitality, then, in ordinary decency, you must take a man 'in on the ground floor'. There are in Calcutta thousands of Bengali men and women whose society is a delight; and the British community does not know them, and two races who if they mingled could not fail to find mutual pleasure and esteem think of one another through the medium of their newspapers. The whole thing is villainous nonsense. Thirdly, if a residue of obstinate gunmen remains, as they remained in Ireland, enemies not merely to an alien government but to any government except one by themselves, then the Irish parallel will justify itself as fact, and they will be handled by their own countrymen far more drastically than they can be handled under an Ordinance which makes dreadful faces but is half humbug.

The Punjab is considered the crux of India's communal problem. I used to think so, too, but am changing my opinion. In the Punjab the warring communities stand on some level of cultural and economic equality, each can give way and yet keep self-respect. In Bengal the communal quarrel is embittered by the Hindus' conviction that they thrashed

the Muslims most abominably in the street-pogroms of six years back; and is complicated by the absurdity that while the Muslims are 54 per cent of the population they are about 5 per cent of Bengal's cultural record and not very much more of Bengal's wealth and influence. The prevalent tone of the province is despair, in the middle and upper classes shot through with an element of incipient hysteria. Whatever happens, a grim experience lies ahead of Bengal; and her people know it.

VI

THE DISCONTENTS OF 'A.G.K.'

It has been freely stated in India, and by people whose character gave their testimony at least the weight that attaches to honesty, that the North-West Frontier Province has been the scene of wholesale shootings; and in especial, that at Kohat occurred 'a second Amritsar'. The impression is widespread that the authorities yearn towards a policy of 'Thorough', an impression for which (as I have said already) they have themselves and their censorship to thank. But as regards Kohat they have been misrepresented. The shootings took place at several times on December 26th, 1931, and the dead may have amounted to twenty (official number, thirteen or fourteen killed and twenty-one wounded). These casualties were inflicted under great and repeated provocation. Large bodies of Red Shirts used road metal (a pile lying handy) and tried to rush the troops. Shooting took place in self-defence and as a last

resource, after long arguing.

But disorders and their repression are only symptoms. It is important to know their causes. The N.W.F.P. authorities have a strong case, supported by detailed and dated evidence, against Abdul Ghaffar Khan, whose notion of the Delhi Pact and of what its observance entailed was vague, just as his quite sincere enthusiasm for 'non-violence' was obviously unaccompanied by any clear idea as to what non-violence is, beyond a call for the exercise of patience. The Administration control

'. . . a virile and excitable people living on the confines of British India and separated only by an invisible line from tribal territory where well-armed tribesmen are watching for the first signs of the breakdown of the existing order by which they have so long been kept in check.'

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's speeches abound in such passages as this (November 15th):

'Englishmen have made us hungry. They have enslaved us. Who has made us naked?—Englishmen. To-day Islam is ruined and destroyed in the whole world. Who has ruined and destroyed it?—Englishmen. We have arrived at this conclusion, that Hindus, Sikhs and Mussulmans cannot progress unless and until we annihilate these Englishmen. Our

Islam cannot progress so long as Englishmen are in this country. Our dispute is with Englishmen. We have two parties; one is the army of God, the other is Satan's army.'

Nevertheless, the continually recurrent themes of his speeches demand closer attention than they are likely to get in our present triumphant mood. He has only four or five things to say, and he used to say them in every speech. He urged his people to adopt the Englishman's loyalty to his own order:

'Brethren, have you ever seen that in this country a Firangi has killed another Firangi? Brethren, have you ever seen a Firangi committing dacoity? Have you ever seen a Firangi murdering his brother? Or giving a diary about his nation? Has he ever made a secret report against his nation?'

He goes over the physical attributes of Englishmen —their two eyes, two hands, and so on—to prove they are mere mortals and not superhuman. The vanity with which he is credited comes out in his frequent boasts that the Red Shirts have made the Pathan world-renowned and that he gets letters from New York and Boston.

But the main impression that emerges from his speeches is that either these people are hungry, or else that they think they are. Behind Peshawar are

hills whose desolation is terrible. Their inhabitants simply must loot or else (as now) be bought into peacefulness. Still further in, behind these hungry people are people hungrier still, people starving. Women trudge down the Khyber burdened with firewood which sells in Peshawar for ten annas a maund (a shilling for 80 lbs.). The crumbling hills, quite obviously, were fairly well forested in comparatively recent days; we can only guess at the stripping that is taking place in the still wooded hills beyond our Border. Hunger is eating up the trees, and twenty years hence the rivers that irrigate the N. W. F. Province may begin to dry up. Abdul Ghaffar Khan continually breaks out in wrath against the Europeans' luxury:

'No other nation has such a good country as ours. Our country produces date-sugar and sugar-cane. Our country is the best of all countries. But our living becomes the food of the English. The treasuries are ours, but the Firangi uses them. He drinks wine and eats roast meat five times a day. He lives in fine bungalows while we die of hunger.'

The North-West Frontier Province has hitherto been fortunate. It has spent and has asked Delhi for the money. It will now have to work on a budget (with a subvention from the Central Government,

which the Legislative Assembly is unwilling to let pass without scrutiny). Peshawar cantonments impress even the observer who has seen many cantonments as having been built by people unhampered by financial considerations. 'A.G.K.' could not be expected to know that it was not his own people, but India, that paid for the administration whose material splendour he considers so extravagant. Indian cantonments are bound to look costly, probably costlier than they are. A reasonable amount of space, of untrammelled air and unoccupied land, is the Englishman's right and necessity if he lives in India at all. But the N.W.F.P. Government is top-heavy even by post-War Indian standards. And we ought to be aware how things look to other people.

It has to be noted that the motive force behind what had undoubtedly become a subversive movement was envy, the bitter feeling that on one side is poverty, on the other opulence. There is only one method by which revenue can be collected from these people, the immemorial method of force. Revenue collected by burning houses or even villages (a duty which British troops have to carry out, doing it without enthusiasm) is costly in more ways than one. No one should lightly criticize the men

who keep the Indian border, and a wide latitude of action that in the settled provinces would be intolerable must be allowed. But it is to be hoped that some measures now employed are temporary. In 1932, yes. But in 1933? Or 1934?

The new Governor's Province will be judged not by the measures it is taking to end the Red Shirt menace, but by its constructive policy. Its success in ending the Red Shirt movement has been partial only. Its problem in some respects resembles that left by the last Jacobite rising: the Highlanders were pacified by roads—we have these already in the N.W.F.P. hills—by emigration, by enlistment in the Army. The oil strata alleged to run under the desolate hills may prove an economic way out if their exploitation ever proves feasible. The Frontier seems to me our greatest Indian administrative achievement, after the Punjab. But there is no disguising the fact that we have had a bad setback, which continues. The Pathan is now unfriendly, where before he was friendly. The tribes are gripped by new ideas. It is easy to point out A.G.K.'s crudity and vanity and ignorance, to ask what he thinks he means by 'non-violence'; but ideas have definitely come to people very short of them formerly, and the ideas are working. They believe that outside their borders

is a world far happier and wealthier, and that their condition is wretched and has no self-respect in it. It will be a mistake if the Red Shirt movement is dismissed as just another stirring of unrest. 'We've had a bit of a dust-up. And of course those Red Shirt fellows really were getting dangerous and had to be settled. Well, thank God, we had a Chief Commissioner who was the right sort, a soldier and not a political, a chap who stands no nonsense from anyone, whether A.G.K. or Delhi or those damned swarajists! So that's all over.' It is not all over.

What is happening in the N.W.F.P. is the most important thing in the East. Two diverse autocracies are making their last stand, confronted though not in actual opposition. The 'saheb that is a saheb' doctrine, shaken elsewhere in India, here is erect and strong, the Army approving it. Across the Border is medieval kingship and codes of rule, and our experiment of a Constitution is being watched all the way to Kabul and beyond, to Bokhara. If that Constitution is a success, even very moderately a success, nothing contiguous to it will be left unchanged, whether it is the Amir's régime in Afghanistan or that in the militarised section of India. To us the Red Shirts are merely a vexing interlude that is finished; fifty years hence they will be seen as the

queer beginnings of a new way of life, for a people who had not known a new way before in millenniums, except when Islam first came to them.

than Rs. 15 a person a day. I admit frankly to prejudice in this matter of expensive picnicking. I was once one of a party of four, which included a lady, doing one of the Himalayan walking trips. We had engaged in advance, as one must do, dak-bungalows along the route, and paid for their use. As we were going towards the first of these, all the afternoon we were passed by strings of coolies burdened with apparently everything one could think of. There were ninety-one of them; and when we reached our dak-bungalow we found it cluttered up with boxes and packing-cases and servants. We refused to give up our right—there was only dripping Himalayan jungle all round us—but were sent a peremptory order to clear out before eight next morning. His Excellency the Governor was due to arrive a few hours after that, for an afternoon's fishing. I conceived a prejudice against this particular Governor which subsequent study and personal meeting have greatly strengthened. I sometimes think that I know what Indians must feel.

The Butler Report on the Native States observes: 'It has been represented to us that the pay and status of the Political Secretary should be enhanced, in order that he may be enabled to approach other departments with added weight and dignity.'

This perception, that added pay would lead to added weight, which would give added dignity, must have come in Calcutta (was it from the University Senate or the Barrackpur golf course?). We can see that there cannot be many more wasteful systems than the Indian administration.

The belief that the East is impressed by extravagance is the most mischievous of all the outworn beliefs that we cherish. In his *Indian Commentary* Geoffrey Garratt asserted that 'politically, Congress has shot its bolt'. To-day this surprising statement after six years of uncertainty is proved true. *Politically*, Congress is not going to be of first-rate importance again. But *economically* it has by no means shot its bolt.

The ablest of the Governors told me that during five years past he has voluntarily returned one-fifth of both his salary and his sanctioned household expenditure, without finding the sacrifice excessive. But governorships, like the viceroyalty, are exceptional posts. The Congressman, unable to resist the spectacular, attacks the Viceroy's salary. He would do better to concentrate on other salaries, less defensible.

There has been a 10 per cent cut on all the salaries. This is very hard on such services as the

police, who might have been spared while much heavier cuts were made elsewhere. British life and British administration, both at home and in the Empire, have got to resign themselves to a lower standard of spending. I think that in the circumstances of to-day few people who looked into the question would not admit that there is an unjustifiable gap between the pay of the Indian Civil Service and that of other services. The premier service carries an adequate pension, even if you have moved only through its ordinary stages, which leaves the extravagant payments at the top unjustifiable. Salaries at this end grade upwards steeply: and the top jobs are too many. The universal lapse in political morality since the War has shown itself in India in inflation of the higher ranks of administration. Government begins by being top-heavy at the Centre, and provincial governments have to follow suit. And the 'hot weather exodus' continues to be more costly than ever, although we have New Delhi, which to everyone but its actual denizens shows now as a blunder perpetrated in happier days when silver, as in Solomon's reign, was of no account, but casting its irremovable shadow on our own grim age. Many Englishmen confess to the prejudice they feel whenever they have to visit it. The amount of

prejudice it has aroused and keeps alive is incalculable; and no one can say how much imitative extravagance its example has produced.

The whole East is feeling its poverty acutely. The Indian Government would gain prestige by some austerity in high places. All the essentials of the most comfortable existence that India can give can be had on a much lower scale of salaries (as the many soldiers and officials who serve on pay that the Secretariats would consider penurious know) than the top men demand. It is, of course, expensive to live in an Indian capital. But it is expensive to live in the British capital, it is expensive to be a Cabinet Minister or even a Member of Parliament, and you have no pension secured to you. Quite apart from the question of the cost of the Indian Army, Indian Administration will have to be reduced in expense by much more than a 10 per cent saving. Not sedition, but necessity, is going to dictate this.

Buildings have been raised that are needlessly impressive. It is the sight of the New Delhi that wins over to the Congress economic standpoint not only Indians, not only Americans skimming through the show places, but Englishmen, among them officials. The Pathan leaving his hungry hills is confronted by a government which began in the camp but has

gone into Capuan quarters. This conviction, that the administration is too expensive is not going to die down again; nor is that other conviction, that India is getting poorer value for her money than she used to get. Add to this that economic troubles need far more searching examination than they will ever be granted under the existing system. You will become haunted by the feeling that the Indian Government is as obsolete as John Company was in 1857 or the Habsburg Monarchy in 1914.

The British taxpayer may as well become interested in the Indian economic position; the last Secretary of State pledged his backing for India's debts. Those debts are going to increase, and nothing in the present system can prevent their increasing. Action more drastic than mere rearrangement of present methods is needed; and only rearrangement is contemplated.

The bottom has fallen out of the land revenue as we have known it. The cultivator is never going to pay his full dues of revenue or of rent again. He has tasted blood, he has been (rightly) given such remissions as were never given in the worst pre-War famine years. These remissions were not merely a concession to immediate necessity. They were recognition that the land is disproportionately bur-

dened. It is not that it is unfairly assessed; it is often generously under-assessed in value. But when a country ceases to be almost solely agricultural the State's resources cannot depend as they used to do on taxation of the land. Also, the peasant has to bear the burdens of moneylender and zemindar or taluqdar, of absurd religious tabus, of the drop in prices for his produce. It is a mistake to suppose that the relief given by such governments as that of the United Provinces is temporary. Much of it has come to stay, by consent or by default and rebellion. The men most intimately connected with the U.P. land administration know that far more than even generous relief is wanted. What is done will have to be quite as much as was done in Ireland.

If the land revenue drops permanently, where is money to come from? The present method is to shift as much of the burden as possible on to foreigners, British and others. They have to import a great deal of their necessaries; their incomes can be ascertained with some approximation to fact. Nothing but responsibility joined with sheer necessity following on a considerable experience of disaster first will dissuade any Indian Government, whether swaraj or such as we have now, from putting off the facing

of the financial problem as long as possible and relying on expedients.

The Princes, who have passed through a prolonged period of acute division marked by much personal feeling, have now come down strongly for 'federation', so long as they have 'adequate safeguards', meaning thereby (as they explicitly say) the keeping of their internal sovereignty intact. Of course they had to decide to federate; any other decision would have made the future chaotic. The States have such absurd boundaries, are so intricately woven in and out of British India, cranking in here and swinging out there, with fragments often severed by a hundred or two hundred miles of British territory from their main area, that administration in a self-governing British India will be hampered intolerably if conducted alongside Powers that claim to be unconnected with any larger Indian Government. But let no one suppose that the Princes will yield more than sheer necessity dictates, an attitude which from their point of view—particularly if you know the character of many British Indian politicians—is wise as well as selfish. They reiterate with frequency 'their entire sympathy' with the aspirations of Indian Nationalists outside their territory (so far as these aspirations are 'legitimate').

But what they really want is to get rid of 'paramountcy' and the Politicals, and to get back the Residency areas that are now a heart of alien and sometimes overbearing authority inside their own States. Very few of them, if any, believe in democracy (who is going to wonder at this?), though some of them are troubled by knowledge of the extreme difficulty with which autocracy is going to be perpetuated. They are almost to a man hostile to the Government of India's political department, and they have suffered much from the less self-respecting type of Englishman who wishes to cadge luxurious entertainment and big-game shooting and sometimes soft well-paid jobs. It is surprising that they nearly all entertain such frank friendliness for a considerable circle of Englishmen: and the reality and depth of their attachment to His Majesty's person and house are not to be questioned, however queer they may seem in a world rapidly tumbling apart.

What is a State, however, going to do when its most populous cities become industrialized (as is happening with several leading States), and change into turbulent centres where tradition and religion vanish, where caste distinctions, even 'untouchability', merge into a general working-class consciousness in communication and counsel with the ad-

vanced labour movements of Bombay and Ahmadabad? Can the Princes continue as autocrats, or hold their revenues as private income? Will their subjects consent to remain unfranchised, when their neighbours act as a sovereign people?

There are Princes who arouse indignation by spending the State income annually outside India; or whose new palaces at New Delhi (which, *The Times*, March 28th, notes happily, 'increase in number each year'—*tantum mali* our bad example *potuit persuadere*) or in their own heavily over-mansioned dominions are watched resentfully as they rise. Their order contains also freakishly wasteful members. I read in the Delhi *Statesman*, in February last, the name of a Boars Hill neighbour, as having had an interview with the Viceroy. What was he doing in India? Not two months before, I had promised to write to him. He had been summoned by cable to fly (literally) to the aid of a State whose Ruler had precipitately deserted it, apparently because of some mental derangement. This particular Prince's pet extravagance had been dogs. He kept seven hundred, each with its own dog-boy; a captain of dog-boys was over every twenty dog-boys, and a veterinary surgeon ranking as general commanded the whole. An electric fan whirred night and day above each

dog, 'to keep off fleas'. The immaculately behaved dogs fed off golden plates, the average dogs off brass, the naughty dogs off iron (and very deeply they realized and mourned this humiliation). There was a dog cemetery with memorials. There had been dog marriages, with photographs (the lady in one case wearing jewellery estimated at Rs. 50,000) in Bombay papers. An Englishman who had to see His Highness on a sweltering day of 1930 observed, mopping his brow (and not unhopeful of a drink), 'It is very hot, Your Highness.' 'Do you think so?' responded His Highness, greatly interested; and touched a bell to summon his Prime Minister and order that a special train take his dogs to the seaside immediately. 'This gentleman tells me he thinks it is very hot.'

But the Princes who are solely spenders are not a problem confined to India. Even in our own country are people whose main contribution to the commonwealth is the spectacle of their expensively magnificent lives. Nevertheless, the more irresponsible Princes merely exaggerate mischiefs inherent in the princely state. The Princes already experience a temptation which will grow greater, the temptation to form a close alliance with the Government (those clustering—'fringing' is the word of *The Times* cor-

respondent—palaces at New Delhi are a symbol); and if the Princes and our own reactionary elements united, there is no doubt that they could preserve autocracy intact for a few years longer. But the Princes are such a necessary element in the salvation of India, and in their number are such really first-rate men, that we must hope that they will see that the crisis marching upon India challenges them to the heights of patriotism and wisdom which in other lands similar privileged orders have occasionally attained. The Prince who trusts his people and exchanges his swollen right to new palaces, fleets of cars, elaborate shikar parties, for a fixed civil list of reasonable proportions and who uses his position to be his subjects' bulwark and misery's safety-valve will have opportunities of service that fall to hardly anyone in the world outside India.

As things are in India, there is no safe way but that of reckless honesty. Orthodox religion has to go, and the sooner the better; a teeming country cannot support the miseries it enjoins and involves. A princely order fighting whether craftily or obstinately to keep privilege intact, a Government seeking merely to perpetuate an over-costly system and to keep discontent muttering instead of shouting, these will make revolution inevitable.

Only wars and revolutions (one is tempted to think) ever end long-established evils. What milder exigency will compel radical rearrangement of the habits of the people and their rulers? There are three extravagances that India can no longer support: the Government as it is, the Princes as they are, and her own social system. The last is by far the costliest, though the least regarded by Nationalists. Even if government wastefulness were ruthlessly pruned, even if the Army were reorganized on the basis of Indian needs instead of those of another World War, even if the Princes rose to acts of austerity and self-abnegation, we should be helped only a little way.

There is little hope abroad in India at the present time. Perhaps the most hopeful sign is the fact that there is a more widespread conviction than ever before that the main causes of the appalling economic prospect are not alien or princely wastefulness and mismanagement but over-population and social customs. I saw in March a just-married girl who was not a day over eight years old. She will cohabit with her husband before she is thirteen, and will have a child before she is fourteen. The families concerned were low-class, and to remonstrance merely replied, 'It is our custom.' What can be done with a

country where two human animals are put together to breed, not because they are fit for it or wish it or can support children, but merely because custom and religion enjoin it? Yet educated Indians are thinking about social and economic factors as they never did before. If there has been no outburst of anger such as marked the last civil-disobedience movement, it is largely because contempt is growing for both Government and Congress, as equally busied with futile aims. I am certain that 'the unchanging East' is going to pass through a volcanic phase, in which Hindu civilization and religion may lose their good as well as their evil. Meanwhile, what hope is there in patriots who can think of nothing but means of hastening on anarchy, and in a Government which will not take the risk of throwing open everything to discussion without reservation, and which has no plan but that of keeping people in gaol?

VIII

WHAT HAPPENED AT JALIANWALABAGH

Jalianwalabagh has profoundly affected all who have seen it. A dozen years ago, a distinguished soldier and explorer, who justified General Dyer's action to me—'It was Prussianism; but, then, Prussianism is necessary'—added that another soldier who had been even more pro-Dyer than himself had returned from Amritsar saying, 'I'll never say another word. It was sheer massacre.'

Jalianwala, now a memorial garden, was in April, 1919, a dreary eight-acre expanse. It is sunk below the level of Amritsar, in a nest of tortuous streets. You enter by a very narrow passage, opening on to the platform where General Dyer's tiny force of Gurkhas and Baluchis deployed. Half-left before this platform and against the enclosure walls is the well where orators addressed a mob asserted to have numbered many thousands. Towards this well firing

was directed; bullet-marks are on the wall, some with inscriptions saying what they are. Thirty people were reported to have jumped into the well and been drowned. This was almost certainly exaggeration.

The official casualties settled down at 379 dead and about 1,200 wounded. Twenty lakhs of rupees (£135,000 at pre-War par) were paid in compensation to relatives of the slain. The committee (two Indians, one Englishman) which scrutinized all claims found that about 250 could be substantiated. The memorial near the entrance asserts that 'fifteen hundred innocent people were martyred'. The official figures may, I think (and I have had some experience of battlefields), be accepted, to include also those who died afterwards or whose families put in no claim. I believe they are too high. Even so, I do not wonder at an American friend's account of his visit with S. K. Datta, two days later. The dead had been removed, but the testimony of blood remained; and Datta stood weeping and saying, 'This ends the British connexion with India.'

The outside world has never had the slightest conception of the intensity of feeling in April 1919. 'Both sides were absolutely crazy,' my American friend has told me. He added, as other Americans

have added, that it was 'touch and go'. An official intimately connected with the disorders told me of a conversation at the time with an Indian of high standing in the Province, who said, 'If the Indian Army holds out till October you are all right. Otherwise you are for it.' There was disaffection in some Indian units. Afghanistan was invading India, and a war was being waged which is commemorated in Kabul with memorials and lists of the dead as the Afghan 'War of Independence'. Sabotage was taking place on the railways, telegraph wires were being cut, buildings fired, murders perpetrated. A wave of bad temper like the influenza epidemic was sweeping over the world, showing itself in civil wars and shootings in Germany and Hungary, angry strikes in Britain, twice as many lynchings in America as in 1917. Sir Abdul Qadir, two days before Jalianwala happened, tried to get a train from Gujranwala. He found the station deserted except for one frightened clerk, who assured him that there had been no train since the previous morning and that he did not know when to expect another. Unexpectedly, a collection of cattle trucks mysteriously rumbled in, crammed with people shouting, 'Gandhike jai' and 'Governmentke chai' (Victory to Gandhi!' 'Down with Government!'). A Muslim

youth whom he knew came out from the waiting-room towards the train—a military cadet going home on leave, a light-complexioned boy in European army kit and cadet's cap. The crowd immediately rushed to lynch him: he was saved by another Muslim shouting, 'He is a Pathan—a Pathan—one of ourselves! His father is So-and-so of Lahore.' Visualize this scene as not exceptional, but typical, and you will get the passionate unreasoning anger of the time.

Over a dozen years I have met an exceptional number of men who were close to what happened and have known intimately protagonists of both sides. Much of what I have been told I cannot pass on. But some facts hidden hitherto ought to be known. Indian minds have been outraged by the memory of General Dyer's brutal, purposeful massacre, as revealed in his own testimony. They have been carrying a burden greater than the truth warranted.

Jalianwalabagh is shut in by buildings and is the perfect death-trap. The only break of any sort was just behind (and to one side of) the well which was the storm-centre. Here is a mud-and-brick wall which I believe was about five feet high. No one can say now, for the memorial committee have had it

built up to double this height. They could well have afforded to leave it untampered with—a five foot wall lashed by rifle fire and with a frenzied crowd surging before it is an entirely efficacious bar to escape. From Jalianwala there was no real outlet. Fifty men fired 1,650 rounds in between five and ten minutes.

Mr. Miles Irving, now Commissioner of Lahore, was Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar in 1919. General Dyer did not let him know of his purpose before going to Jalianwalabagh. A chance sentence that I heard in Delhi made me anxious to know more of what happened afterwards. Dining with Mr. Irving, when five of us—Mr. Irving, Mr. F. G. Puckle (Financial Secretary, Punjab Government), Sir Abdul Qadir, Mr. Schuyler (an American educational missionary) and myself—were together after dinner, I said to Mr. Irving, 'I have been wanting to ask you a very improper question. What did General Dyer say to you after Jalianwalabagh?' He replied, 'Dyer came to me all dazed and shaken up, and said, "I never knew that there was no way out." He explained that when the crowd did not scatter but held its ground he thought it was massing to attack him, so kept on firing.' Mr. Puckle now said that six months later General Dyer came

through his station and dined with him, and told him, 'I haven't had a night's sleep since that happened. I keep on seeing it all over again.'

I have never doubted that General Dyer's action saved the Punjab from a revolt, with its attendant horrors. Nor have I ever doubted that it did irreparable mischief to the Raj, and that he shot away more than he preserved. His deed was appalling—firing into that crowd as we can visualize them, without realizing that there must be something wrong when they did not race away. Yet we may dismiss once for all the belief that he was anti-Indian or a man naturally cruel. The man who 'kept on seeing' what had happened was neither of these things. In justice both to him and to human nature we should remember that he went to Jalianwala straight from news of murder and arson and resolved to act sternly, but that he never planned the slaughter that ensued. He 'never knew that there was no way out'.

Seven months elapsed before the Hunter Inquiry. He found that in the tragic intensity of men's emotions he was regarded as a hero. The disorders had ceased instantaneously, and an alternative presented itself to his first dreadful thought that he had blundered. Pressure of outside congratulation helped him to build up the conviction that he saved

the Empire. The witnesses before the Hunter Commission stood lonely before their examiners, in a court filled with angry hearers. 'There is no doubt that Dyer was trailing his coat' (said Mr. Irving), which, indeed, is very obvious. He refused to listen to advice, and took his own line of insistence on playing a martyr's rôle.

The story of the last dozen years would have been immeasurably happier had we realized that Jalianwalabagh was the scene of a mistake and not of calculated brutality. I asked Mr. Irving, 'Why was not the Hunter Commission told what he had said?' He made the perfectly natural answer, 'Do you know, Dyer and I both clean forgot. I was being questioned hard about other things' (and it must be remembered a witness's job is to answer questions put to him and not to divagate) 'and he was determined to fight.' I asked further, 'Have you any objection to my publishing what you have told me?' 'None,' he replied.

General Dyer made his own legend of what he had done, and he imposed it on the world; and no man ever made a worse mess of his own case. The Lytton Strachey of 1952 will find an absorbing psychological study ready to his hand. Dyer persuaded himself and us that he went to Jalianwala determined

on deliberate massacre. It simply is not true. He went to do the job of an officer called in to suppress disorder with which the civil authorities could not cope. The rest happened as I have said.

IX

PRINCIPLES OF A PEACE

A year ago we had in Great Britain a Labour Government which, by admission of its supporters, proved itself a poor one. The present Government, the necessity for whose formation I for one deplored, has made a difference in the right way. It has shown itself a great deal more efficient than the Indian Central Government which depends on it. That Government has made a show of strength, but is essentially timid—afraid of seeming weak, afraid of reactionaries in England or in India, afraid of the clamour that decided action (other than the solely punitive) arouses. India needs a Government that governs; and governing is not merely locking people up.

Nothing of recent days has more enhanced Government prestige than the Sarda Act raising the marriage age. Government would not lose in any single respect even if it enforced the Act.

Consider the Round Table Conferences. The first reasonably enough occupied itself with exploration and ran its course as a sequence of debates. The second Round Table Conference ought to have got somewhere; the British Government ought to have remembered that the British people by no volition of the present generation are a party to the Indian problem, and not mere onlookers. A settlement of the communal squabble, so far as a political agreement is a settlement, has got to be imposed, the earlier the better, this duty having been delayed too long. Even a settlement regarded by one party as in some respects unjust would win us friends on all sides, if it were seen to be a genuine effort to hold the balance fairly.

With the States we still have the chance to be benevolently overbearing, though the scope of such action is woefully limited as compared with what it was twenty years back; but the possibility of such action exists, though it will not exist much longer. To take boundaries alone, Baroda is in seven pieces, some of them mere points of isolation in a sea of British territory; Indore is in similar if less flagrant case—one bit of Indore has two hundred miles of British India between it and the rest of Indore. There are villages jointly claimed by Indore, Gwal-

ior and Dhar. We could at least secure something in the way of possible administrative boundaries for at least some of the States.

Nothing can be done in India to-day that will not be objected to. Objection has got to be accepted, even reasonable and partly justified objection. The dangers that beset courage and honesty are trivial compared to those that beset vacillation.

Nationalists, whether Congress or co-operating, will have none of provincial autonomy until they can have everything. They are making a mistake. It is the provinces that matter, they are the living organisms that need to be freed from this dying body of a Centre. Delhi, too, is still obsessed with the gaudy and top-heavy structure. But elsewhere knowledge is spreading that the new nations will not be held back and that the economic troubles will not wait.

Both parties lose prestige when they fuss about prestige. Congress all last year was determined to keep face and to push itself in as a parallel Government; it laid itself open for its heavy defeat. Government now is wasting energy by persecuting Congress activities that are unimportant or even beneficent, and by allowing people to go on wondering if it has any plans other than punitive ones. The com-

parative quietness of the country is recognition that Congress has played the fool and that India has problems deeper than any action on the solely Constitution-making or Constitution-breaking plane can affect.

I am aware that the Army overwhelmingly, a majority of civil officials, and most of the European business community endorse the new policy, which they take to be one of showing our strength and standing no nonsense. Looked at from a place in the European or Government ranks, it has apparently been successful. I know only too well how far reaction has gone. 'You and I', said a Calcutta newspaper editor, 'are probably the only Europeans in India who now think that even General Dyer's action was wrong.' This was poetic exaggeration; but it had more basis of truth than it would have had at any time during the last eight years.

In the job of getting India on to Dominion status, Army opinion is going to prove by far the heaviest drag and obstacle, even though this opinion is unexpressed in publications. We can sympathize with the British officer's distaste for what he regards as a yielding to dishonest clamour. The Army is largely outside of India, though its defence. It is concentrated on the Frontier or in Frontier districts. It has

had an extremely unpleasant experience since the War. Units have been kept standing to, for weeks on end expectant of trouble; this has usually ended in a march through a few streets whose bravoes have run like rabbits. Contempt for Indian politicians is natural to men who have undergone such days and nights; there is no reason why they should feel respect. Anger with the civil administration is not much less natural. It is almost inevitable that military opinion should hold that if the Army were given a free hand for ever so brief a period it could settle all this nonsense once for all.

It could certainly settle it for a time, as it could have settled it in Ireland. Irishmen pretty close to the facts will tell us that when we made the Treaty with Ireland we had rebellion 'on the run'. We could have smashed it by a short continuance of repression. And what good would that have done anyone? I suppose there is hardly anyone, even in the British Army, who is not now glad that the Treaty was made. In the latter part of my Indian sojourn this year Irish affairs were those that were most discussed, and I never heard any Army officer even contemplate as possible any violent action by Britain against Mr. de Valera. There was profound satisfaction that the Irish quarrel had finally shifted

on to a plane where bullets and bayonets were obsolete.

I think it a miracle that the Indian Army has remained loyal, a miracle second only to the loyalty of the police. I believe I see something of the exasperatingly difficult position that the British officer has found himself in, for several years now. Yet I cannot but think that he is wrongfully prejudiced in this political matter, and that some of this is his own fault. As an Englishman who learnt in the War to feel the deepest admiration for those of my countrymen who are trained to arms, an admiration which I have tried hard to express, I think that the Army went back further than the civilian soldier did and forgot some decent lessons too quickly and thoroughly. The British officer in nine cases out of ten recognizes no sort of comradeship with any Englishman outside his clan. If by accident you run up against him and by some fluke he suddenly sees that you also are human he is the finest-mannered person on this planet. But unless this accident and this fluke happen he has 'no use' for you, as every P. & O. boat that plies between England and India proves afresh. Since he does not accept his own fellow-countryman, naturally he does not accept his Indian fellow-citizen; naturally he is incapable of even

beginning to think there may be an opinion or a judgment other than that obtaining in military circles. There is such a thing as intellectual in-breeding.

I suppose we are all pretty bad, who have had anything to do with India. Mr. Lionel Curtis once told me that he found it almost impossible to persuade anyone who 'knew India' that his opinions, however distinguished and experienced he might be, after all were only opinions and that they might be wrong. The Master of Balliol's appeal to Mr. Gandhi in my drawing-room should be made as a perpetual appeal to ourselves. 'In the bowels of Christ think it possible that you may be mistaken!'

I know that I ought not to write in this personal way, which is the worst kind of writing. But there *is* a tragedy going forward, and men of the utmost 'decency' are making it worse because they think it their duty to think in certain ways; they are so bent on being patriotic that they will not try to see if the other man has any right on his side.

My heart went out to an Irish lady who exclaimed (she having been a sound 'patriot', too) about Mr. de Valera's latest activities, 'I'm sick to death of oppressed nations! I'd like to see them a jolly sight worse oppressed! It would do them good, Ireland

and India, both of them!' The hopeless whine of the Indian who puts down everything to the Government, and who can always prove that the Government is in the wrong, is one thing that makes the Indian controversy worse than depressing, it makes it actually degrading. Yet, saying this, I see again the thousands of friends I have in every part of India, and with humility I remember their patience and their fairness and their kindness and their abounding belief in my people. The tragedy of the business is that Indians like us better than they like any other aliens; they have never been able to hate us as the outside world holds that they ought to do. Most of the present estrangement is non-political and could be removed in the easiest fashion imaginable. Why don't we take Indian friendship for granted? It is there, waiting for us. I remember a famous Indian telling me, twenty years ago, that on the few occasions when he had met officers of our Army he had lost his resentment against their presence in his country. 'I know it's wrong. But they attract me more than your civilians do.'

I believe I know all that can be said for the Government's refusal to allow negotiations with its prisoners, and I sympathize with the refusal. For the Viceroy we can feel only respect, and for his gallant

attempt to pass on substantially intact the political system that he took over we may say that by keeping Mr. Gandhi and his more turbulent lieutenants in prison he makes it easier to hammer out a Constitution. The latter have been constructively as efficient as Mr. de Valera proved himself in Ireland. They could not even realize that the constant mixing of politics up with administration was clogging all helpful movement. Nor could they disentangle the diverse sections of the defence problem—that of internal law and order (which depends intimately on the state of communal feeling) and that of the Frontier, which sends back roots far out of British India, along the crowded trade roads through Afghanistan to Central Asia. We can, then, in the enforced absence of the recalcitrants, having created an agreed quorum and called it peace, thrash out the impressive and troublesome constitutional problems. But what of the time when the Constitution has to be put into practice? When the jails are opened and their inmates are released unreconciled, to take part in the first reformed elections and either capture them or wreck them?

And here the eternal parallel of Ireland, so often misleading and mischievous, becomes grimly relevant. Is India going to skip the period of a

'Free State' Government that by repression more rigorous than the alien Government dared to exercise for a time pushed its own former Left Wing under, and to pass straight on to a Government of defiance, such as Ireland is seeing now? Events in Dublin have almost certainly given a respite in India, have postponed the explosion while they are being watched. If Ireland 'walks out' of the Empire without a gun being fired to prevent her, then Mr. Gandhi's demand that India's 'right of secession' be at least granted abstractly falls. The right is proven and established and acted upon. If, further, the British Government while not using force exercises economic pressure and exercises it effectively, so that either the Irish secessionists are coerced by their own folk back into partnership or else grave harm is done to Ireland's commercial interests, then Indian big business, already half uncertain as to whether the non-co-operation process is not proving too costly, will provide Congress with the essential financial sinews unwillingly and insufficiently. In any case, the Indian problem will have changed drastically and definitely within the next few weeks.

Yet negotiation sooner or later is inevitable. Whatever happens in Ireland, whatever happens in India, you cannot keep a large proportion of that

part of India which is politically conscious—the most vigorous and aggressive section—in prison throughout prolonged discussions and then think that the upshot of those discussions will be peace. We have not 'lost India' yet; but the next two years will see it lost unless we win over far more than the handful of Moderates. Government is now in a strong position; it will presently be in a weak one. If there is anything in former experience, it will negotiate when it is weak and cannot afford to negotiate, instead of now when it is strong.

The Delhi Pact was wanting in two respects. It left out Mr. Nehru and Mr. Patel, and no settlement has a chance that is made with Mr. Gandhi alone. Secondly, Congress was right in maintaining that the pact was essentially an armistice and no true peace (though this does not excuse the flagrant contempt of the terms of the armistice). The pact was too much concerned with details—as to what fines and penalties were to be remitted, what discharged minor officials and ejected tenants should be reinstated. We could get a genuine peace based on recognition of principles.

If negotiations were successful, Mr. Gandhi would never be the same political force again, nor would Congress recover its menacing arrogance. Mr.

Gandhi would come out of prison to be merely one of many Indian politicians, some of them his superiors in practical sense and knowledge. If Government acts with the generous carelessness which only a victor can afford, Congress will not get over its egregious blunders of 1931.

Supposing negotiations should fail? Then we should know for certain what at present very many doubt, that Mr. Gandhi never meant to co-operate and that no sort of injustice is done by keeping him in prison. Either way he is finished as a first-rate subversive force, which is all that anyone should desire.

These are the principles of a genuine peace:

(1) Simultaneous withdrawal of civil disobedience and of the Ordinances, except in the North-West Frontier Province and Bengal, which should be kept as special cases for special consideration.

(2) Unequivocal recognition of Indian right to propaganda on behalf of swadeshi goods and withdrawal of any suspicion of 'sedition' attaching to the use or advocacy of khudder.

(3) Unequivocal recognition that if despite propaganda—which is not to cover picketing—people want to sell or buy foreign goods they are free to do so.

(4) The setting out of a definite programme of reconstruction.

As to (1), in the mood of humiliation that followed the Comilla murder and the attempt on Sir Stanley Jackson's life the temporary exception of Bengal would have been accepted by a majority, including many Congressmen. That mood, of course, has passed. Yet even now it could be driven home that Bengal terrorism is a stain on Mr. Gandhi's personal honour—does anyone anywhere any longer believe his movement is 'non-violent'?—and that for his own sake he has got to help to bring Congress influence to bear. You will never eradicate terrorism without Congress exerting every ounce of authority it may possess. As to the N.W.F.P., I suggest that an effort be made, such as some of us made (with partial success, too) in the long talk with Mr. Gandhi I have referred to earlier, to drive home the fact that there are *two* Indian defence problems, external and internal, and that Congress leaders might as well have a good look at the Frontier before they assume that the British Government is solely obstructive. Anyway, I think Government would be right to be 'sticky' about both these exclusions, and would have them accepted, so long as it was made clear that they were temporary while

the special problems connected with these two provinces were discussed.

As to (4), the programme of reconstruction should include the land settlement problems of Bengal and the U.P.: the cutting down of 'overhead expenses' of Government, something more drastic at the top instead of the 10 per cent all round, which has been hard on the more poorly-paid services: the placing of the Army on the basis of Indian necessity, forgetting the coming World War, except in so far as an agreed conclusion of India's interest in it could be reached: universal primary education with an agricultural bias, literary education to be made much more expensive so as to choke off at least 60 per cent of those who now try to get very nearly valueless degrees: cut the Provinces loose from the Centre, and give them practically unfettered power to work out their own salvation. As to the States, I should let Indian leaders negotiate for themselves, as to representation for subjects of the Princes and other matters; there are Englishmen who could act efficiently as 'honest brokers' and friends of both parties, and the British-Indian Government, if it will act generously, holds powerful arguments in its ability to give the States much better boundaries. Such Princes (to name a few) as Their Highnesses of

Bikaner, Sangli, and Indore are men who care greatly for India and its people. If the right people set about it, this problem is not insoluble.

On April 13th, the Indian Government added four new items to the Round Table Consultative Committee's agenda. Two are of the first importance if business is really meant; their inclusion, belated though it is, must be welcomed:

(1) Readjustment of Provincial boundaries;

(2) New Provinces.

These promise a better job than mere tinkering with the system in being.

It will be remembered that in the Crimean War the Tsar attached great value to 'Generals Janvier et Février'. Probably Generals Economic Misery and Wrong Social and Racial Relations are going to defeat us in India. At any rate, no Constitution is going to be carried through by the strength of the Indian Moderates. Therefore, since Congress cannot be executed out of hand, negotiation is certain—some time. Government still has the power to choose its time. Meanwhile let a start be made with provincial autonomy somewhere, instead of jumbling all India together as fit for Ordinance rule.

EPILOGUE

Governing, then, is not the present manifestation which so many believe to be the real thing at long last. It is not the effort to metamorphose the Administration into a kind of ubiquitously pouncing cat, imprisoning here, releasing momentarily there. It is, in India at present, unflinchingly overhauling a dozen obsolete systems and starting such a re-creation that your critics will see a job in which it would be a shame not to collaborate. Do this; and you will be justified in every way (and justified in Indian eyes) in treating those who refuse to collaborate with far more rigour than they are being treated with now.

It was Jalianwalabagh that started Congress on the road that led to the present impasse. The misconception that led to General Dyer's tragic action has a parallel in the situation now. It is simply this: 'there is no way out.' Government may go on repressing and imprisoning, marking time while it holds conferences. But neither Congress nor the

Indian people can find a retreat over the economic, political and social walls that contain them. Like General Dyer and his Gurkhas deployed on their platform, Government commands the only exit. The political quarrel holds together the baneful social and religious systems. It postpones a resolute tackling of the economic horrors.

I am as certain as I was in January that a settlement is possible. If it came it might dissolve the threatening future. Goodwill, free action of thought within the Indian systems, resolute facing of the whole political and administrative and economic job, might preserve the sub-continent from a wretchedness worse than China's and closer to us than Russia's.

Yet I do not believe that a settlement is coming. I cannot but think that India is destined to become a spiritual Jalianwalabagh: a memorial on the one hand to a multitude of needlessly made martyrs, on the other to blindness and lack of quickness to recognize and confront any situation that turned out other than was expected.

THE ANGLO-INDIAN COMMUNITY

THE ANGLO-INDIAN COMMUNITY

No section of the population of India has more reason to look ahead with misgiving than the Anglo-Indian (Eurasian and Domiciled British). This community suffers severely from unemployment, which is increasing as the railways are Indianized. It has practically no prosperous members, for these disappear into the British community unless complexion makes this impossible. I was given a crowd of such instances, to which I could have added as many again from personal knowledge: there was a New Zealander 'with a dash of Maori blood' (who had considerable difficulty in getting into New Zealand), an English railway man 'with a Spanish grandmother', a number of 'dark Scotsmen'. No one can wonder at this movement away from the community, but it is bitterly resented by those left behind. It leaves the Anglo-Indians a rabble without leaders. The European Association, in a natural desire to strengthen itself, invites the 'domiciled British' section to join them. This leaves

only the genuine Eurasian, and only the darker Eurasian at that; the European Association is now full of 'Anglo-Indians' of both kinds, domiciled pure blood and light-complexioned mixed. Those who have gone are not only lifted in social status, they can claim 'overseas' allowances in addition to their Indian pay. But their departure leaves only a skin division.

To add to the difficulty caused by this exodus at the top there is encroachment at the bottom. Generations ago there were Indian Christians who joined the community, to escape from the isolation of the early converts. In the hell-broth of caste and racial and religious prejudice of every sort which is stirring and seething in India to-day, these are a despised ingredient. Some of them are almost negroid, having come from 'untouchable' clans; they add to the scorn that the pure blood races of both sides feel for the Anglo-Indian.

It is painful to contemplate even for a few minutes the humiliation that the Anglo-Indians have suffered. A distinguished general whose advice was asked could suggest only that children with no touch of colour should be educated in England and then settled in the Dominions. That means division of families, a final severance of children from their

parents and from their brothers and sisters. A lady who is a political and intellectual leader of the community told me, with details of name and residence, of experiences that must recur continually. The daughter of a planter, a child of ten at Dr. Graham's Homes at Kalimpong, spent the day of her father's wedding weeping: she had been told that from now on she could never return to her home. My informant's own child played as an equal with a Civil Servant's child, until a visitor took it upon himself to ask why 'this dirty little Eurasian' was mingling in the society of the nobly born.

It is hard to find any disability that has not been laid on this unfortunate people. Many of them are Catholics, and therefore the use of contraceptives is forbidden them. A girl who was married at fifteen has had six children in six years, but has been told that she will be excommunicated if she exercises birth control. The community is poorly educated and cannot expect a self-governing India to make it grants. As I have said, it is a community whose leaders steadily desert it and keep thereafter a studious aloofness and ignorance of its existence. Its girls serve often as typists, and are very unprotected when their employers happen to be men of no character; there is the long hot weather when wives are away

in the hills. A new perplexity is arising. Far more English girls of respectability marry Indians than most people begin to suspect, far more than used to do. Though the children of these marriages are very sensibly brought up as Indians, the girls tend to gravitate to the Anglo-Indian community. The parents are practically always dead set against marriage into that community, so the other thing happens. It should be added that the Anglo-Indian proper practically never marries into Indian society.

The community numbers approximately 300,000. Certain misrepresentations need to be smashed. It is not the fact that they are most of them descended from lawless unions. In early John Company days intermarriage was encouraged, and the children were accepted as British and the sons given covenanted employment, both civil and military. In those days, when they were treated as people of our stock, they showed the best qualities of that stock, and Anglo-Indian names shine memorably in the story of the British in India. I feel shame every time I stand in the Residency at Lucknow and look at the ruins of that advanced post (over against the heart of the bitter fighting, confronting the haunt of 'Bob the Nailer') which fifty boys of La Martinière held throughout the siege. No boys in the world's

history ever did a more gallant job. In the material development of India also, the community has done essential service. India is so full of teasing inhibitions (or was, until recently) that the railways, for example, could never have been started or run without being manned by Anglo-Indians. I accept 'indianization' as just and unavoidable; but on the railways it is inflicting great hardship on this community.

Shallow people blame them for not having identified themselves with Indians. But the Hindu community cannot accept additions. The society is sufficient to itself; it can give you a friend's status (which is all the real alien desires), but it will not naturalize you. If we are told to doubt this, the courts are convincing us; there is the gentleman, a Prince, who asks divorce from his white consort because he married her under the influence of an infatuation which has now passed off and because his Brahmins have authoritatively informed him that her ceremony of hinduization was invalid, since a non-Hindu cannot become a Hindu.

A great many powerful people, the Princes and the British business interests and our own nation, are saying very loudly and plainly and often, that we must have 'safeguards' in this Indian business.

I do not know what safeguards there are that are worth anything much. However, there are to be safeguards for the strong and wealthy. Has anybody whispered the word in connection with the Anglo-Indian community? There is not much that could be done, but we might secure a reservation of employment for a few years to come. What else can be done? All racial and colour bars and prejudices are shocking injustice—which does not mean that indiscriminate intermarriage should be resorted to—and men and women everywhere and by everyone should be taken on their merits and on nothing else. But no community, certainly no community in India, is prepared to act on this. Segregation has been suggested; they might be invited to settle in some special area. But there are not desirable areas in India unoccupied. All we can do at present, it seems, is to ask the British people to be aware of this problem and to keep it in mind.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE VERNACULAR LITERATURES OF NORTH INDIA

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE VERNACULAR LITERATURES OF NORTH INDIA

The chief Indian vernaculars run back to about the same period, a thousand years or so; and entered upon a century of intense activity when the beginnings of English education came. Bengali, the earliest to awaken, is still the most vigorous and various; beside it a great deal of the other vernacular literatures looks naïvely old-fashioned.

Rabindranath Tagore's astonishing abundance and technical versatility have continued unabated. The range and excellence of his work will never be appreciated until the filigree fashion of his publication (I am speaking of his 'translations') is forgotten, and the West has his work in literal versions chronologically arranged (with notes when necessary. What is wrong with notes, anyway? They can even be interesting in themselves, as well as a lamp upon new ways). He continues to overshadow his generation. Even those who are vexed with his work can-

not get away from him; his name intrudes on their every discussion. Ten years ago he broke new ground with the delightfully urbane and gracious rhythms of *Lipikā*, prose pieces opening with an adaptation of Lucian's *Dialogues* to the Hindu Olympus, and with *Muktadhārā* (*The Free Current*), his most impressive use of allegory in drama. He has never ceased to expand and exploit the formal possibilities of Bengali, so that in despair his younger contemporaries have had to turn more and more to content, for they cannot hope to be the older man's equals in technique.

There was one younger poet, Satyendra Datta, whose metrical achievement at some points surpassed Tagore's, in much the same way as Swinburne's surpassed Tennyson's. He died in 1922 and left no successor. In Bengal as in England, there is no encouragement for a poet, so poetic minds turn to prose. There are fine poems still being written, however. Among the poets between forty and sixty, who may be regarded as established and in their main lines of attainment known, may be mentioned Kalidas Ray, Karunanidhan Bandopadhyaya, Jotin Bagchi and Mohitlal Majumdar. The last-named has, perhaps, not had the recognition that his compeers consider his due; possibly because his work,

which is largely metaphysical love-poetry, contains so much experimental diction, Sanskrit and vernacular elements mingled.

The younger poets are interesting in their freedom and variety. Achinta Sengupta is criticized as too precious in phrasing and as wanting in constructive ability (he writes short stories and novels, as well as verse). Sudhindra Datta, editor of *Parichaya*, the organ of the advanced group of writers, a poet whose style is packed and often hard to follow, is an admittedly skilful craftsman with a very extensive vocabulary. Sajanikanta Das provides the criticism of clever parody of his more serious contemporaries. Two Muslim poets are Kazinusrul, whose songs are popular, and Humayun Kabir, the ex-Secretary of the Oxford Union. The former is more Hindu than Muslim in sentiment, but distrains extensively on Persian for diction; he is metrically very happy, and many of his single lines are greatly admired. Mr. Kabir's translations from English poets are thought highly of; he has a host of friends at Oxford, and his future will interest us no less than his own countrymen.

I have mentioned *Parichaya*. The men responsible for this monthly are as keen minds as exist in any country. They are cosmopolitan in their reading,

and among British writers prefer such as T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, and Aldous Huxley. Their careers will recall similar movements in our own and other countries. They have launched a number of magazines (luckily the group appear to have a certain amount of money to burn) which have come to shipwreck, but have attracted attention first, often angry attention. They know the whole range of English literature and can use their knowledge effectively. In the last number of *Parichaya*, for example, is a brilliant poetic variation on Rossetti's *Troy Town*. The magazine contains criticism of current literature in many languages. The group have no bigoted objection to shocking contemporary conservatism. Indeed, the two heaviest counts against it are the unnecessary filth and indecency of some of its works, and its excessive imitation of Western writers. Sailajananda Mukhopadhyaya uses the new material provided by the swift industrialization of Bengal, especially along the Damodar river, and takes account of aborigines (Santals) as well as artisans; he uses dialect freely. The note of all this school is experimentation; they sit loose to traditionalism of every sort. Premendra Mittra, another short-story writer, studies the psychology of the workers and is much concerned with the problem of

love outside marriage. Dr. P. Guha-Thakurta, in an article in *Triveni* (January 1931), an admirable journal issued from Madras and devoted to Indian present-day literatures, while enthusiastic about these writers enters a caveat against their obsession with the physically repellent. The Bengali-reading public has not yet been as drenched with 'realism' as other publics have. But Dr. Guha-Thakurta says, with justice:

'The greatest contribution of these writers to Bengali literature has been the creation of a new technique of writing—free from wordiness and vapour of rhetoric. They have freed the Bengali language from the bondage of long, windy narrations, and intensified it with the pulse-beats of the spoken word. They have scrupulously avoided pictorialness.' '

The greatest recent success has been Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyaya's *Pather Pānchāli* (*The Story-drama of the Road*), a novel very vividly recalling the experiences of a child, an imaginative child, on the background of ordinary village life. The author, who has had a hard struggle to arrive, leapt into fame with this book, after some earlier not altogether effective stories. He has an unusual passion for outdoor life, and has roved as far as Africa, enduring

much poverty for the sake of freedom and variety of experience. *Pather Pānchāli* takes his hero to the age of fifteen only; a sequel, *Aparājita* (*The Undefeated*), shows him in Calcutta, and is a more patchy book, the author being out of sympathy with city life. A still younger writer (he is only about twenty-two, having just completed his University course), Buddhadeb Basu, has been publishing poetry for eight years and has always written in a singularly mature manner. He is regarded by the *Parichaya* group as the ablest of the youngest writers. Rajashekhar Basu, who writes as 'Parasuram', has aroused delight and enthusiasm by his *Bhusandi* (*The Waste Land of Bhusan*), which Mr. Sudhindra Datta described to me as 'the eternal triangle in the ghost-world'. A dead man finds himself claimed by two wives of previous births, and this awkward personal confusion pervades their discussions of many matters.

These writers are playing a powerful part in the upheaval of Hindu sentiment which is such a feature of modern Bengal. Twenty years from now, their work will seem in retrospect similar to that done by Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. H. G. Wells, and a score of other writers, for us. They had a predecessor in some respects, in Saratchandra Chatterjee, whose

fame as a novelist stands apart as Tagore's does as poet and short-story writer. The first part of his semi-autobiographical novel *Srikānta* has been translated and praised for its really superb descriptive quality. It has more than this, however; the heroine, a woman of the *hetairae* class, is a moving piece of portraiture. The second part of *Srikānta* equally merits an English version; parts Three and Four (the last now appearing serially) are said to be inferior. Sarat Babu's short stories are often excellent. There can be no question that he is a man of genius. He is also a singularly attractive man. They told me that he had betaken himself to the obscure fisherfolk who live beside the Rup-Narayan river, and I was sorry not to be able to renew old acquaintance.

Since revision of the outside world's opinions concerning India is urgently called for, let it be noted that the serious writers of Bengal have done for ever with the traditional literature, of Radha-Krishna love-scenes and laments, of endless variations on a few religious and semi-religious themes, hymns to Kali or Durga, and so on. Also, though the rest of India will continue for a while longer to produce books with such titles as *A Chaplet of Pearls* or *Flower-gathering*, young Bengal, in its authors who count, has finished with them. Perhaps little of the

work of these new writers will live. But they have opened a way and created a method.

After me cometh a builder. Tell him, I too have known.

Where Bengali was concerned I had the advantage of meeting many of the significant writers and of established friendship with some of them. I had not the same advantages as to the other vernaculars of Northern India. Hindi, for example, is not concentrated in two or three cultural centres as Bengali is in the Delta towns, especially Calcutta, but is widely diffused over many capitals. Urdu has a literary existence outside strictly Urdu centres. The most eminent Urdu poet, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, openly expresses his preference for Persian and is understood to have given up the writing of Urdu verse. Urdu is overshadowed by Persian, as Hindi is apt to be by Sanskrit, and neither vernacular seems to have yet attained to the independent literary life which so abundantly belongs to Bengali. These almost interchangeable tongues have their leading poets in places as apart as Lahore and Calcutta and Hyderabad: in Lahore is Iqbal, in Calcutta Sayyid Reza Ali *Wahshat* (the italicized name is the *nom de plume* that has supplanted the real name), in Hyderabad Shabir Hasan Khan *Josh*. All these three are about fifty. The last-named writes long poems

on social and political themes, *Wahshat* writes love-poems. A poet who is moving away from Persian models is Sayyid Kalbe Ahmad *Mani*, editor of the periodical *Taṣnim*. Sayyid Ali Naqi *Sufi*, of Lucknow, an older man, is a Shiah and a Nationalist in poetry (the Shiahs as a rule are opposed to the separate electorates demand of other Muslims and so are readier to align themselves with Indian Nationalism). Maharaj Bahadur Barq, of Delhi, a descriptive poet, is a Hindu.

Sir Abdul Qadir, a critic as cautious as he is learned, an enthusiastic lover of Urdu and Hindi literature who values without over-assessing, tells me that short stories are more popular than novels with his people. A very popular novelist, Abdul Halim Sharar, who wrote romances and historical novels re-creating the life of Islam during the Crusades and other times of testing, died in 1926. He still lacks a successor.

Marathi literature is at the beginnings of the ferment which Bengali has known for so many years. Its poetry is mainly lyrical. As is well known, it has had a long line of noble religious poets, not the least distinguished being the Christian Tilak, who used the classical manner and metres with acknowledged mastery. The young poets to-day find all this older

poetry too metaphysical and religious and monotonous. Such a representative of the traditional (yet enlightenedly traditional) school as N. C. Kelkar, of Poona, while sympathetic, told me that he felt there was a cult of the over-sentimental of another kind now, by lyrists obsessed with erotic themes. 'These writers lack objectivity, and forget that love is only part of life.'

Mr. Kelkar has played a large part in Maratha literary and political life—and on the larger political stage also, as a co-founder with Mr. Jayakar and Dr. Moonje of the Responsivist Party in 1926, and as editor of Bal Gangadhar Tilak's journal, the *Kesari* ('Lion'). He is an accomplished writer in English, of the earlier, elaborate fashion created by our quarterlies and exemplified by Macaulay and Lowell; a fair-minded man, a patriot whose record has been both courageous and sober, a good critic, a Marathi dramatist and poet. Another critic writing in Marathi is S. K. Kolatkar, of Nagpur, a man of about sixty; he writes also fiction and plays. 'Chandrasekhar' Gore of Baroda is a poet of wider range than the solely erotic.

Marathi literature is in transition. Persian words, old words from ballad-poetry, words newly coined, English words—these are all jostling the Sanskrit

diction which many use as carelessly as our own more careless writers use the Latin elements in English. Mr. Kelkar's comment to me was: 'The Brahmin's day is over. But the Brahmins still stand for Hindu culture. There is danger of the non-Brahmin manner, now that it is taking control, ruining the language.'

Gujarat lies at the opposite side of India from Bengal. The two people, the Bengalis and the Gujaratis, show great resemblances in their political and literary activities alike. These resemblances are not accidental; Bengali literature has immensely influenced the other vernacular literatures, but Gujarati most of all. Gujarati draws lavishly and incessantly on Bengali fiction and drama in translations, and (I should say) there is real danger of Bengali stifling the Gujarati spirit. The leading Gujarati writer, Narasimharao Divatia (*ætat.* 60), has avoided this by his own independence of character. His family have represented that strongly and nobly puritan strain of monotheistic belief that so powerfully influenced Bombay as well as Calcutta last century. The story current is that his father, an orthodox Hindu, after his son's death collected his gods in a basket and dumped them in a stream. Mr. Divatia told me, smilingly, that this was but a

dramatic popular version of a revulsion that actually took place. His father passed from orthodoxy to a leading position in the Prarthana Samaj, whose hymns he wrote (as Rabindranath Tagore wrote most of the Brahmo Samaj hymns). The son's services to Gujarati literature are great and various. His lectures before Bombay University laid the foundations of philological study of Gujarati. His critical essays, however old-fashioned the impatient young may now find them, did an equal service in their own sort. He is a poet of high descriptive and lyrical gifts, as his *Kusummālā* (*Flower Garlands*) and *Hridayavinā* (*Heart's Lyre*) showed long ago. Half a dozen years younger is Nanalalpatram Kavi, whose *Jayajayantar*, a drama, will hardly keep its reputation, judging by its melodramatic plot, though the rhythmical prose in which it is written, almost 'free verse', enlarged the technical possibilities of Gujarati poetry. The writer marked out for leadership is K. M. Munshi, now unfortunately in prison as a Congress supporter. His historical novels, especially *The King of Gujarat*, are popular and are valued by good critics.

An important section of Gujarati literature belongs to the Parsees. The complaint is made that they have not kept the language pure from Persian accre-

tions. But it is admitted that individual Parsees have made contributions in both verse and prose. The Parsees, like the Marathas, have strong historical interests. The Marathas are collecting the records of their great past—at Poona the *Bhārata Itihāsa Mandala*, 'The Indian Historical Association', told me that they had over a thousand untranslated letters of Nana Farnavis. The Parsees have been energetic in civic and social matters and have a fine humanitarian achievement to their credit. Mr. C. S. Masani's books on subjects as diverse as Sufi Poetry and the Evolution of City Government in Bombay are good examples of this catholicity and liberality of mind. Mr. Masani is not only a fine writer of English, as these books show, but an enthusiast for Gujarati literature.

This necessarily meagre survey of certain North Indian vernaculars only takes account of the little I have been able to glean in a two-month's visit. I cannot pretend to judge of the merits of work written in tongues which are not my own; but there are in India to-day critics whose judgment is based on other than patriotic prejudices and has been formed by knowledge of European as well as Indian languages. Minds of fine quality are expressing themselves in these vernaculars, and it should be a

matter of pride to us that India is experiencing such a renaissance. A nation's prestige does not depend on its political or military importance. The mere fact that a writer has to use one of the world's less-spoken tongues should not, in itself, mean that his influence is imprisoned within a tiny territory. Malayalam, in South India, is spoken by eleven million people; Norwegian, spoken by three million, has during the last half-century had a world-wide influence second to that of no other literature. Indians must themselves first decide which of their writers best merit the attention of the world outside. But if they do this it should not be impossible to find (or make) channels of communication whereby their thought and literature should reach and enrich the whole comity of civilized nations. I want to see:

(1) 'Oxford Books' of Sanskrit, Persian, Bengali, Hindi and Urdu Verse. It will be objected that these could not pay their way; I will engage to show the contrary. These books would provide standards which, whether accepted or rejected, would be of the greatest value to Indian writers. They would be acts of recognition of the adult status that the vernaculars have attained. They would begin the long overdue appraisement of the

Indian classical literatures, concerning which Europe, which long ago made up its mind as to what Greek and Latin literature are worth *in essentials*, has no sort of opinion but accepts as equally valid absurd exaltation and sweeping dismissal.

(2) 'A Legacy of India', in the admirable Oxford University Press 'Legacy' Series.

(3) 'A Year Book of Indian Art', on the lines of *The Year Book of Japanese Art*, which the Japanese Government issues under the ægis of the League of Nations. This should contain adequate reproductions of Indian pictures of all schools, both old and of to-day, with biographical and explanatory notes. This book might need a subvention.

(4) 'A Year Book of Indian Literature': chapters on each important vernacular, by Indian writers critical as well as patriotic, telling us the main trends and tendencies of each vernacular, what established writers had passed away, what new writers had won recognition, what new books had been acclaimed as important. These chapters should be followed by about sixty or seventy pages of translated extracts—half a dozen pages of description from a Tamil novel, an excerpt of dialogue from a Bengali drama, some pages of criticism of an Indian writer, and so on. I believe some of the writers thus represented

would emerge to separate and individual significance for the outside world. This book should pay its way, if only as an essential book of reference throughout the English-speaking peoples. It might be possible to arrange for translations into French and German, in conjunction with the League of Nations Committee of Intellectual Co-operation.

(5) The foundation of readerships at either or both Oxford and Cambridge, with a wide scope, leaving their holders free to represent any aspect of Indian thought or literature (other than the solely linguistic). I suggest the Clark foundation as a model; and would have these readerships held either by British or Indians, but more often by Indians.

(6) A 'Nobel Prize' for India, to be given each year to an outstanding writer in some vernacular. I should like to see it go one year to such a man as Divatia in Gujarati, another year to Saratchandra Chatterjee in Bengali or N. C. Kelkar in Marathi. It need not be of great monetary value, but it should be recognized as an exceptional distinction, spreading a reputation beyond a writer's own province or vernacular. It should help India to be aware of both her unity and her diversity; and the award should be at least an item of 'news' to the press outside India.

(7) A Hawthornden, or Prix Goncourt, again not necessarily of great value, for an outstanding work of imagination in some vernacular published during the previous year.

(8) Translations of some of the more original recent books, including a selection of Bengali short stories chosen and englished by such a 'modern' group as those responsible for *Parichaya.*

MAINLY ABOUT LIONS

MAINLY ABOUT LIONS

'The *Rhinoceros sondaicus* keeps on cropping up, though only on paper. He is a very rare beast indeed, there being only half-a-dozen or so of his species left. He inhabits this province [Burma] and Mr. Verney, who is well known as a naturalist and explorer, has arrived and will attempt to shoot a specimen for the British Museum. Mr. Verney is a very painstaking naturalist of the new school and spares himself no effort in an endeavour to present his specimens to the public in their correct settings. He came out not many months ago to shoot Tapir.'

The gratifying tidings I have quoted from an Indian weekly are of a recurring kind. 'A popular official' is reported as having bagged eighteen panthers in three days or it may be forty black buck in one day. Some may feel dubious as to whether the surviving party in these meetings is the more ornamental denizen of Indian ways; but it is not often that a panther or a black buck bags a popular official. We must take the world as we find it. The reader will be glad to know that Mr. Verney's mission was entirely successful.

Rhinoceros sondaicus, as the paragraphist points out,

is a very rare beast indeed. As the train crossed the Indus at Attock it was hard to believe that the first Mogul invader killed it there. All three Indian rhinoceroses must, I suppose, be taken as doomed to extinction. The last traces in the Sanderbans, so a Commissioner of Fisheries, whose work had kept him constantly there, told me in pre-War days, were reported as seen in these marshy flats somewhere about 1887. There used to be, before that, not very convincing rumours of rhinoceroses in the Mahanadi delta, but I never heard that any European ever saw them there. 1885 or so (I write from memory of old conversations with all sorts of wanderers) saw their disappearance from the Sonthal Parganas. *Sondaicus indicus* will (just) survive a while longer in the Nepal Terai (and Kuch Behar?), and *sondaicus* in Assam and Burma, and *sumatrensis* in the Chittagong hinterland and where Burma runs into Malaya. But I should like to know more definitely, from men who have seen these animals.

The beasts that must vanish are those that breed slowly or are hard to hide or exist in isolated spots. The Nilgiri Ibex is being looked after by means of permits, but needs this close supervision. The Kashmir Stag, a magnificent creature, would have gone long since if the Maharaja's private preserves had

not kept it; it is to be hoped that these preserves will not be flung open in the present discontents and confusions, as those where the European Bison survived in Poland were flung open during the Great War. The Indian Bison is safe in South India. Indore in Central India still has a tiny herd, which the Prince protects and told me he had every intention of continuing to protect. He had taken note of what happened in the neighbouring State of Gwalior, whose last bison, a herd of thirty, were surrounded and shot down fifteen years ago by 'temporary gentlemen' (I am quoting a seditious Englishman who lives in Gwalior) who had taken the trouble to come over twenty miles in order to achieve this feat. As regards the wild ass, I told His Highness of Bikaner, in London last autumn, that I wished to intercede with him 'on behalf of an oppressed minority resident in his dominions'; the official books allege that Bikaner has 'a herd of about a hundred wild asses'. He told me that the books were wrong, and that he himself had never seen one, but that very occasionally one strayed into his borders from Bhawalpur. They still exist in Cutch, however, or did until yesterday. These, too, are in an isolated area, where they cannot be replenished from outside.

The fauna of India is so interesting because Malayan and African elements mingle, Central India being the actual meeting place. I was told that Princes and others who wanted cheetahs for hunting purposes now got them from Hyderabad. But the officer in charge of the Gwalior shikar department (who knew the whereabouts of everything shootable in his territory and kept a census) said that fifty or sixty survived in the State. They are found in Indore also. The hunting lynx, the caracal, is in both these States.

Everyone knows that the last lion in Central India was shot at Guna, in Gwalior, in 1873 (on Waterloo Day—too good a day for such a deed). Eleven years previously, one officer had shot eight at Guna; and late in the 'sixties, when the railway was being built, engineers shot two near Allahabad. A few months before the very last of all was killed, in 1873, four were shot in Jodhpur. The late Maharaja of Gwalior's praiseworthy effort to give his dominions lions again, nearly a quarter of a century ago, will be remembered. Unfortunately, tigers have increased in Gwalior, and they drove the lions (which in any case had been made too familiar with human beings before their enlargement) to the outskirts of the villages, whose inhabi-

tants hunted them down. Nevertheless they managed to survive in the Sheopur jungles until two years ago. In 1930 the last isolated members were shot in several widely apart places, the very last of all near Jhansi. People still say they are there, but the Head of the Shikar Department says he knows that they are not. The Maharaja of Indore told me that one lion (whose lioness had been among the 1930 victims) was said to be hiding on the confines where Gwalior and Indore meet. 'I have been thinking of getting another lioness for him. I should like to entice him into my State and protect them.' 'If Your Highness will get him another lioness, that will be the best way of enticing him over.'

The lion seems certain to slip out of existence in Asia. During my Mesopotamian sojourn I kept a watchful mind open for news: a lioness and cubs were seen by an Indian trooper near Ahwaz in 1917 (reported in *The Times*), a lion cub was brought through Arab Village near Sannaiyat in 1916, one was shot in the Wadi marshes a year later, they lingered in the Pushtikuh and perhaps on the Khabur River, in pre-War days one had been shot at Sannaiyat by Commander Cowley (who perished in the *Julnar* attempt). These were the teasing stories I collected and kept against the background

of such experiences as Englishmen had had not a century before (Layard, for example, reports in the most casual way seeing a flock of eight walking about on Tigris banks). Sir Arnold Wilson told me recently that the lion was now definitely extinct in Persia. He will be, or should be, glad to hear that this was undue pessimism. An official of the Bombay Natural History Society told me that they had received proof of lions still in Persia, in those Push-tikuh which we used to watch growing more deeply snowcapt, in the days of 1916; and also elsewhere.

Junagadh in Kathiawar, again as everyone knows, has the last Indian, and will keep the last Asiatic, lions. They once shrunk to about a dozen, and are now believed to be about a hundred. They have established themselves in several parts of adjoining Baroda, and the Diwan Sahib of Baroda assured me that the State intended to protect them. The Junagadh lions are reserved for distinguished executioners, Princes or Governors. It is the ritual for every Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief to shoot some before leaving India. They told me that Lord Reading came to do his duty with no great enthusiasm. A high Muslim official told off to attend him left off his jewelled slippers and climbed into the *machan* respectfully barefooted. Out of the jungle

came a lioness and cubs, and the lioness proceeded to show her children, using the dead buffalo as a model, how to kill. Lord Reading proved a bad sportsman; instead of shooting them he looked on fascinated. Presently the cubs, their faces all gory, found the slippers and entered on a happy game, worrying them like kittens, and finally carried them off into the bush. Lord Reading came down from his *machan* and said, 'Drive me at once to the nearest telegraph office,' from which he sent a wire to Lady Reading saying that he had seen the greatest sight of his career, a wild lioness teaching her cubs to play. I shall be very sorry to hear that this story is not true.

INDEX

INDEX